

ABSTRACT

Structure, Culture, and Nurture in Women's Academic Leadership

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This qualitative study investigated what role structure, culture, and nurture play in women's experiences in academic leadership. From personal interviews with 41 women in senior-level roles across Birnbaum's four institutional types (collegial, bureaucratic, political, and anarchical), I discovered common sequencing patterns, deviation from institutional norms, and several functions of mentorship. Using the three strands of structure, culture, and nurture, I gained insight and understanding of women serving in senior levels of higher education. This deeper look at the experiences of women academic leaders in sequencing work and family life reminds the reader that the work of creating supportive organizational structures for women is not finished. Cultural expectations for the role of women lag behind current rates of participation, and women deviate from the institutional culture through their very presence as well as by their leadership styles. Nurture is the most variable of the three strands, evidenced by the broad range of experiences. The value of having mentors is expanded by this fresh understanding of mentors as processors, encouragers, and sponsors. Finally, three archetypes of women's leadership orientation emerged: passers, pushers, and

peacekeepers. Passers, drawing on racial passing theory and stigma, are women leaders who take on stereotypically male characteristics or behaviors to fit in among male leaders. Pushers, based on organizational change theory, are change agents who propel their institutions toward gender equity. Peacekeepers, rooted in political science theory on diplomats, are women who led relationally and collaboratively.

Structure, Culture, and Nurture in Women's Academic Leadership

by

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DEDICATION

To my little lady, Ivy Maeve,
may she always be brave

CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

When you grow up as a girl, it is like there are faint chalk lines traced approximately three inches around your entire body at all times, drawn by society and often religion and family and particularly other women, who somehow feel invested in how you behave, as if your actions reflect directly on all womanhood.
— M.E. Thomas, *Confessions of a Sociopath: A Life Spent Hiding in Plain Sight*

For hundreds of years, women firmly held the domestic roles of managers of the home and caretakers of the children. A *good* woman married and produced offspring all while submitting to the wishes of her husband. Writing on the role of a married woman in the book, *Domestic Duties*, Mrs. William Parkes (self-identified by her husband's name) notes among her instructions to women that “the greater part of a woman's life ought to be, and necessarily must be, passed at home” (1825, p. 369). Or, in the words usually attributed to Mrs. David Simmons: “Let your Dress, your Conversation and the whole Business of your life be to please your husband and make him happy.” Certainly, there are notable *good* women who did not live this way. But, these types of women are the exceptions that prove the rule—the dominance of the white male. Culture established this way of life as normal, and religious views upheld this as the system of order (Cuff & Payne, 1984).

However, in the early 1800s, American women increasingly chafed against being solely occupied with domestic concerns, or what historians have named the “Cult of True Womanhood,” so women joined forces to challenge the socially-constructed version of the good woman (Sexton, 1976; Solomon, 1985). In the first half of the 19th century,

women made their initial debut in higher education (Solomon, 1985). Women have not always had the necessary education and experience for work outside the home and especially not for leadership.

Even prior to the Civil War, academies and colleges specifically for women sprang up to meet growing educational demands, but the institutions varied substantially in their academic rigor and course requirements (Farnham, 1997). The goal of female education, however, was constrained by traditional female gender roles both in and out of the home, though the form and reason varied by region, North versus South (Farnham, 1997). Outright resistance transitioned to ambiguity about women's rights to equal education as men. Although some institutions allowed coeducation, the course work and expectations were typically different for women students (Sexton, 1976). Therefore, women had access to education without being able to access the *same* educational experience as men. Even so, a woman's place was beginning to expand beyond the home. In general, families did not encourage daughters to pursue additional schooling (Sexton, 1976), though some strategic education was recognized as valuable (Farnham, 1997). The cost was considerable when the use of the degree would be limited, but the degree as a status symbol for women and their families gained momentum. Gradually, middle class families began to support their daughters to enter higher education.

By the middle of the 19th century, the women's rights movement picked up momentum, but the social and political events slowed progress for women. From the Industrial Revolution through the Civil War and into the 20th century, women continued to adapt their roles to the needs of the day. By the 1900s, female college students were no longer viewed as deviating from societal norms, and by World War I, college was

considered a valuable aspiration for women (Solomon, 1985). Although women were attending higher education institutions, the courses primarily focused on reinforcing traditional roles of women or preparing women for a particular set of careers (Farnham, 1997; Sexton, 1976). Nevertheless, higher education provided women with exposure to all sorts of people and cultural opportunities. After the war, access to higher education increased for males and females alike, and college continued to gain importance as a prerequisite to a successful life.

Since the late 1800s, females have outnumbered males as high school graduates (Sexton, 1976). By the 1960s, the percentage of women in college increased significantly again—representing a swelling consciousness in women of gender equality. In the early 1990s, women were as likely as men to earn a bachelor’s degree, but by the mid-1990s, women began to exceed men in college completion rates (Bidwell, 2014). The upward trend has continued, and now, the percentage of women college students is higher than it has ever been. Women outnumber men as college graduates; women make up about 60 percent of college graduates and earn nearly 60 percent of all master’s degrees (Bidwell, 2014). And, recent reports show that women earn more (51.8%) doctorate degrees than men (National Center for Education Statistics, 2016b). Thus, access for women to attend colleges and universities no longer seems to be the hold up in the pipeline.

In the last century, the role of the American woman has experienced seismic shifts. The influx of women in the workforce has been one of the most notable social and economic changes (Sexton, 1976; Solomon, 1985; U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2011). The working woman challenged the traditional role of a woman, facilitating a widespread cultural impact.

Many people view women's increased participation in the labor force as synonymous with societal progress, but not all people hold this perspective.

Some women today do work because they realize that they benefited from educational opportunities women in their mother's generation never dreamed of having. Other women work because they find their jobs rewarding. Many, many more juggle work and children because their families depend on their income. (Moe & Shandy, 2010, p. 2)

Thus, not all women chose paid work as their first choice. Despite the differing opinions, access to the workforce for women has increased. Understanding the progress that women have made in the spheres of workforce, leadership, and education is essential to a richer understanding of the current expectations and experiences of women.

The Changing Role of the American Woman

Women in the Labor Force

Representing about half of the U.S. population (50.8 %), women have not traditionally held parallel representation to men in the labor force (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2015). Women's participation in the labor force can be viewed as having evolutionary and revolutionary phases. As Goldin describes it: "Each evolutionary phase, moreover, led to major advances in the field of modern empirical and theoretical labor economics that mirrored the reality of women's changing role" (2006, p. 3). The first phase lasted from 1900 into the 1920s, in which the majority of women did not work and did not consider work an option. Almost half of single women held jobs, but only 6 percent of married women worked outside the home (Goldin, 2006). Women with children were even less likely to work outside the home.

However, a movement of married women joining the labor force began around 1920. In the late 1920s and early 1930s, the second phase emerged when women did not intend to work but the political situation necessitated women's involvement in the workforce (Goldin, 2006). Because men were required to leave their jobs to go fight in World War II, the labor force participation rate of women reached an all-time high. After the war, some women left their jobs to pursue higher education, which had not been easy for women to access before the war. Other women continued to work and became secondary earners for their families.

In this time period, a woman's ability to have a career *and* a family became a highly debated topic. Women chose one path or the other but struggled to know if they had made the right decision. In the 1930s, Vera Micheles Dean, who was a modern professional, wife, and mother, proclaimed that "no woman should have to make a choice between home and career" (Solomon, 1985, p. 185). Most women of her generation (and the following generation) did not understand why women would have a need or a desire for both a family and a career, but those few that shared her sentiment began to redefine the roles of women in American society. A new perspective emerged that gave women permission to embody multiple roles. The redefinition of the role of the American woman continues today as women try to reconcile the competing interests of career and family.

The entrance of women into the labor force on such a large scale led to the third phase from about 1950 through 1970 (Goldin, 2006). By the 1970s, women could access higher-level jobs (previously only available to men) and continue working while pregnant. Not only were more women working but more women *with children* were

working. The labor force participation of married women with young children increased more than fivefold from 12 percent in 1950 to 70 percent in 2012 (U.S. Department of Labor, 2013). Because women's participation in the labor force was such a new phenomenon, statisticians only started tracking in 1950 the number of working married women with children under age six (U.S. Department of Labor, 2013). The rapid entry of women has completely transformed the landscape of the labor force. The effects of the Feminist Movement are marked by the exponential increase of women in the workplace. More women, and more educated women in particular, enter and work in the labor force than ever before in history. However, more access for women to the labor force during the twentieth century did not equate to advancement of women in their jobs.

Women in Leadership

For decades (if not millennia), women participated in the workplace without leading it. Certainly, women had an increase in access to traditionally male-dominated jobs, but this was not equivalent to an increase in access to high quality or high-ranking positions of leadership (Cohn, 2009). With such a rapid surge of women into the workforce, policies and structures in businesses and organizations were not able to keep up with the necessary adjustments for their new population of employees. Moreover, while the role of the woman was shifting, gender roles for men had not been similarly reconsidered (Hazelkorn, 2011; Koelet, de Valk, Glorieux, Laurijssen, & Willaert, 2015). In effect, men were not entering the private sphere of housework in comparable numbers (Esping-Andersen, 2009).

Men had been known as the leader (not to be confused with the manager) of the house and the provider for their families. A good man was believed to “act with

aggressiveness, dominance, and courage” (Kimmel & Aronson, 2003, p. 108). Society assigned women the more delicate and instable qualities, which did not deem women as fit for leadership (Adler, 1999; Catalyst, 2005). Thus, men took the lead—after all, this *was* their traditional role. However, traditional roles were under scrutiny, and women began to call these normative assignments into question.

Glass Ceilings, Maternal Walls, and Sticky Floors

To describe the barriers to leadership that women were facing in the workplace, the term *glass ceiling* was introduced in a *Wall Street Journal* article by Hymowitz and Schellhardt (1986) to describe that women were unable to climb up the corporate ladder because there was a transparent barrier or an absolute blockade that was preventing their progress. When women began their careers, the glass ceiling was undetectable and irrelevant, but, later, this invisible barrier would keep them from attaining equal leadership authority with men (Moe & Shandy, 2010). Obviously, the acknowledgement and naming of a glass ceiling did not offer any solutions for why so few women were leading businesses and organizations, but the term did heighten awareness of the existence of a problem. Many females were qualified, both educationally and experientially, for leadership positions but were not achieving upward mobility with the same ease as men (American Council on Education, 2012).

After several years of a cultural conversation about the glass ceiling, the U.S. government established the Glass Ceiling Commission in 1991 to focus on three main barriers: the filling of management and decision-making positions, skills-enhancing activities, and compensation and reward systems. One of the findings of the Commission included the sticky floor of the economy. Harlan and Berheide (1994), whose research

was funded by the Commission, discovered that women, more so than men, who entered low-level jobs had limited opportunity for advancement. In their terminology, these women were in “sticky floor jobs”—jobs that are essential to the functioning of the organization but often viewed as trivial (Harlan & Berheide, 1994). Examples include clerical staff and data entry operators, administrative support workers, and paraprofessionals, which are usually low paying and low ranking. A woman defined by having a sticky floor job seldom advances to higher-level work.

Although some women encountered glass ceilings and other women found themselves hampered by sticky floors, mothers in particular met “maternal walls”—unwritten expectations that encouraged women to exit at the first sign of children entering the picture. Women, if not pushed out for pregnancy, were “mommy tracked” or blocked from upward mobility in the organization after having children (Jones, 2012; Moe & Shandy, 2010). Depending on the workplace environment, the same woman may or may not successfully combine fulltime employment and raising children.

Unfortunately, maternal status changes the way a woman is viewed and treated in the workplace. The Pregnancy Discrimination Act of 1978 provides legal protection for women and forbids employers to discriminate against women for pregnancy, childbirth, and related medical conditions (“The Pregnancy Discrimination Act,” 1978). Despite the legal efforts to eliminate discrimination against mothers in the workplace, maternal walls have not completely come down.

Though the success of the Commission was difficult to measure, cultural awareness of the concept of the glass ceiling and the sticky floor promoted change. In 2004, Carol Hymowitz, who coauthored the 1986 article, wrote another Wall Street

Journal article titled “Through the Glass Ceiling” (2004)(2004). In this article, Hymowitz discussed women’s professional progress, acknowledging that women are no longer completely excluded from senior leadership (2004). The newspaper who had first declared the existence of the glass ceiling was now declaring that the landscape for women had shifted again. With more women becoming senior leaders, the concept of the glass ceiling no longer seemed an apt metaphor (Hymowitz, 2004). The once impenetrable barriers for women have become permeable.

The glass ceiling *has* cracked, and in some cases dramatically so. Women now head some of the world’s most powerful and successful companies—for example, General Motors, IBM, PepsiCo, Lockheed Martin, and Hewlett Packard all have female CEOs (Fortune, 2017). Though women senior leaders are not yet the norm in *Fortune* 500 companies, women have been making strides. As of 2017, there are 32 female CEOs (about 6.4 %) of the biggest American companies that are run by women—the highest percentage in the history of the *Fortune* 500 yet far from equal (Fortune, 2017). The presence of women leaders shows women have made progress in the work force, yet the percentage of men is much greater than women in leadership positions in almost every sphere.

A caveat to the cracking of the glass ceiling is the issue of women’s pay. Interestingly, when women reach senior leadership roles, they do not receive the same pay as men for the same job—they receive *more*. Recent comparisons of male and female CEOs show that females earned a median compensation package of \$13.8 million whereas male CEOs had a median package of \$11.6 million (Lublin, 2017). Newspapers were quick to declare the reverse of the gender pay gap (Bellstrom, 2017; Lips, 2017;

Lublin, 2017). However, given the small percentage of women CEOs, the conclusion that the gender pay gap has closed is a result of faulty reasoning. Focusing on well-paid CEOs distracts from the bigger picture. Most women in the U.S. continue to face a gender pay gap. Across all segments of the labor force, women earned about 83% of what men earned (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2015). Women in academia still see a persistent salary gap—female faculty made 82% of what male faculty made in 1975 and only 83% of what male faculty made in 2015 (American Council on Education, 2016b). Although the glass ceiling is not as strong as it once was, the gender pay gap persists, particularly at colleges and universities.

The Metaphor of the “Pipeline”

Gender inequality at leadership levels was originally explained as a pipeline problem—the belief that there were not enough women eligible for leadership positions (American Council on Education, 2016b). The pipeline metaphor assumed that the number of women inputted into the system (attending college, graduate school, etc.) would be equal to the number of women at the top of the system (CEOs, presidents, etc.). However, the pipeline is full of educated, capable, and experienced women, but men still hold the majority of leadership positions in higher education (American Council on Education, 2017; Catalyst, 2017). Women hold about 37% of tenured faculty positions, and fewer than one in ten women faculty are full professors (Finkelstein, Conley, & Schuster, 2016). The problem with the pipeline, then, is that the presence of a large pool of women working in higher education does not inevitably lead to women in leadership. Some researchers suggest an unidentified clog or a leak in the pipeline while others point to structural constraints, but without consensus, researchers continue to study and

theorize about problems in the pipeline (American Council on Education, 2016b; “Barriers and Bias,” 2016; Braun, 2016; Christensen, Schneider, Goulden, Mason, & Frasch, 2011; Paulus et al., 2016). In other words, qualified and motivated women are available, but more research is needed to understand the experiences of women in the pipeline.

Women Leaders in the Pipeline

Women are both experienced and educated, and organizations as well as some individuals are making efforts to support, or *nurture*, women leaders in the pipeline. Despite the majority participation of women in higher education, the underrepresentation of women leaders is a conundrum (Fitzgerald, 2013; Gallant, 2014). The literature gives three primary explanations for why women are slow to fill senior leadership positions in higher education: (1) *structure*—institutional policies and practices, (2) *culture*—work-life balance, and (3) *nurture*—models and mentors. The confluence of these ideas in the context of higher education has not been studied. An understanding of structure, culture, and nurture for women in the workplace sets the stage for the particular case of women in higher education.

Structure

Organizational structure includes formal policies and procedures and informal practices that make up an organizational system (Mukherjee, 2015). The architecture of organizations ensures that women encounter more structural barriers than men do (Guess, 2006; Ibarra & Ely, 2013; Shakeshaft, 1989; Wyer & Srull, 2014; Zarate & Smith, 1990). Even when an organization espouses an ideology of meritocracy, that “rewards should be

determined by achievement, rather than by sex, race, religion, influence, or socioeconomic status,” the enactment of these values is surprisingly slow (Sexton, 1976, p. 7). Thus, structure in this sense includes two elements: (1) persistent gender discrimination and bias in organizational settings, and (2) barriers to women’s advancement in said organizations (American Council on Education, 2012; Cardozo, 1989; Cook & Glass, 2014; Creswell, 2017; Ibarra & Ely, 2013; Ryan & Haslam, 2005; Shakeshaft, 1989).

Gender discrimination and bias. Initially, women were faced with strong resistance from men, and other women, about their entrance into the workforce. Resistance typically came in the forms of blatant bias against women (Shakeshaft, 1989). Employers did not try to hide their beliefs that women were capable of less, so women were given “lightweight” tasks and offered lower-level positions (Shakeshaft, 1989). Until discriminatory acts became addressed by policy and law, public prejudice was permissible (Cox, 2008).

Common barriers that emerge for women in organizational settings are grouped into two categories: *overt* sex discrimination and *covert* sex discrimination. Overt sex discrimination is illegal and includes not hiring a person because they are a woman (Shakeshaft, 1989; “Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964,” 1964). Congress passed the Equal Pay Act of 1963 and Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 to prohibit gender discrimination on wages, salaries, and hiring (“Civil Rights Law,” 2000). The Equal Employment Opportunities Act of 1972 furthered these attempts at nondiscrimination by requiring employment reports at federal, state, and local levels (“Civil Rights Law,” 2000). Governmental efforts have been part of a massive effort by

American culture to redress what was a systemic and persistent problem of equality and access (Cox, 2008).

Covert discrimination, more recently termed *second-generation gender bias*, is subtle and “embedded in stereotypes and organizational practices that can be hard to detect, but when people are made aware of it, they see possibilities for change” (Ibarra, Ely, & Kolb, 2013). A substantial body of research finds that for women, second-generation gender bias lingers in the workplace and prevents women middle managers from becoming senior leaders (DeRue & Ashford, 2010; Ibarra & Ely, 2013; Ibarra et al., 2013; Kolb, 2013; Moe & Shandy, 2010). Second-generation bias can result in less direct and more complex types of workplace inequality and shape the experiences of women. Thus, at this point, discrimination is primarily manifested in the lack of female role models, gendered jobs, and desired career paths rather than blatant disregard for women. Second-generation bias persists primarily because of a lack of awareness not a desire to exclude or harm (Ibarra & Ely, 2013).

Even so, current organizational structures are constructed based on a white male norm due to the historical dominance of Whites in America, and researchers agree that structural change is needed (Guess, 2006; Ibarra & Ely, 2013; Shakeshaft, 1989; Wyer & Srull, 2014; Zarate & Smith, 1990). However, organizational *structures* cannot change without organizational *culture* and *nurture* practices and policies changing as well. Deeply rooted in culture, covert discrimination hinders women from reaching their full potential. Women struggle to excel at work and at home simultaneously and seek answers for how to negotiate both roles; *sequencing* is an approach that will be explored later (Cardozo, 1989). Similar to the invisibility of the glass ceiling, second-generation

bias is difficult to pinpoint at first. However, consistently, subtle bias surfaces when women describe their experiences at work: feeling less connected with coworkers, being guided toward positions with less responsibility (and less opportunity for upward mobility) to accommodate family, or not being considered for a key position (Ibarra & Ely, 2013; Moe & Shandy, 2010). Researchers have found these experiences to be common for women, which indicate that bias is not just attached to the situation or the individual.

The possibility for change occurs when people become aware of the subtle and persistent effects of second-generation bias in stereotypes and organizational practices (Ibarra & Ely, 2013). Awareness does not equal change, but it opens the door to it. Although second-generation gender bias has been studied in the labor force, further research is needed to explore the ways that second-generation gender bias persists in the structures of the academy.

Barriers to women's advancement. Although the glass ceiling has indeed cracked, women still do not progress at the same rate as men to leadership positions in higher education. Women hold 30 percent of all college presidencies, which makes the presidency position a predominantly male office (American Council on Education, 2017). ACE describes the profile of a typical U.S. college or university president as a white male in his early 60s with a doctoral degree who has been in his current position for seven years (American Council on Education, 2017). In other senior leadership positions, the representation of women is somewhat greater. Women are 28 percent of deans of academic colleges and 36 percent of executive vice presidents (*"By the Numbers,"* 2013).

These data show an increase in the representation of women in leadership positions in higher education, yet inequality still persists.

The women who have been successful are viewed as the exceptions—the lucky or fortunate—rather than capable and the clear choice for the position. Ryan and Haslam suggested that after women break through the glass ceiling, they find themselves at the edge of a glass cliff, or an invisible precipice. The notion of the *glass cliff* is that women have access to leadership in the form of a high-risk job—one misstep would lead to their professional demise (Cook & Glass, 2014; Ryan & Haslam, 2005). Research continues to show that women are more likely than men to be promoted to the top job of a troubled company, and when women are unable to *save* the company, they are replaced by a man (Cook & Glass, 2014; Creswell, 2017). In fact, Cook and Glass (2014) call this the “savior effect” since in four out of 608 transitions cases over a 15-year period companies replaced women and minorities with white men. The glass cliff shows that the road continues to be tenuous for women in leadership.

Eagly and Carli suggest the metaphor of the *labyrinth*, which portrays the challenges women face as they seek to find a successful route to top positions (2007). Unlike the glass ceiling, the labyrinth is not impassable, but women continue to struggle to navigate through it into positions of leadership. Combining scientific research from psychology, economics, sociology, political science, and management, Eagly and Carli offer a convincing argument for the metaphor of the labyrinth that matches the current situation in the realm of higher education (2007). The glass ceiling metaphor indicates that women face obstacles once they climb to higher levels of leadership whereas the sticky floor metaphor suggests that women are unable to advance beyond entry level

positions. However, the labyrinth metaphor more accurately reflects the statistics of women's participation in the workforce by implying that there are numerous obstacles unique to women that women face throughout their careers—not simply toward the beginning *or* the end. In essence, gender parity has not been achieved but progress has been made and new challenges have emerged.

Culture

The culture of an organization is the “social or normative glue that holds an organization together” (Smircich, 1983, p. 344). Culture is a set of shared values and beliefs, and it “influences what people...perceive and how they behave” (Birnbaum, 1988, p. 72). Women's relatively new participation in all levels of the workforce challenges current organizational norms and values. Working women are worn out from pushing through the “second shift” at home. As a result, these educated and qualified women are opting for less commitment at work in order to manage their families at home (Hochschild & Machung, 2012). Work-life balance is not a new concept, yet women leaders are developing new coping strategies. Some women try to excel in work and family while others have joined the “Opt-Out Revolution” and still others boldly deviate from the societal norms.

The second shift. In a landmark study, sociologist Arlie Hochschild evaluated the division of labor at home in families with two working parents (Hochschild, 1989). Hochschild was one of the first to talk about the domestic side of dual-career households as a majority of women entered the workforce. Overwhelmingly, the working mother, rather than the working father, took on the responsibilities of managing childcare and

housework, which was labeled “the second shift” (Hochschild, 1989; Hochschild & Machung, 2012). Although the findings are dated, the concept of the second shift contributed an important consideration in the study of working parents—specifically how the working mother prioritizes work and family. Among working mothers and fathers, married mothers averaged 1.9 times the housework of married fathers (Bianchi, Sayer, Milkie, & Robinson, 2012). Disproportionate domestic responsibilities will continue to be part of the discussion about gender parity in the workforce because there is still disagreement about the optimal distribution of responsibilities for “the second shift” at home.

Because of the increased access of women in the workplace, the support of American culture for women’s participation might be assumed. However, the expectation for women to manage affairs at home remains as well. Although these concepts are not mutually exclusive, work and home do compete for a woman’s attention—especially once women have children. In *The Price of Motherhood*, Crittenden argues that although *women* have been liberated, *mothers* have not (2010). From a multidisciplinary lens, Crittendon evaluates the structural disadvantages specific to mothers. Her argument is primarily focused on mothers who do not work outside of the home, but her logic stems out of the deeply ingrained expectations of the role of women in society and its’ institutions. In the words of Eleanor Roosevelt, “A woman, just like a man, may have a great gift for some particular thing. That does not mean that she must give up the joy of marrying and having a home and children” (Moe & Shandy, 2010, p. 1). Roosevelt’s words express the battle that is still being fought within many women today. As simple as this concept seems, women find the combination to be, at

best, a logistical nightmare. Either women feel compelled to choose one path or the other, *or* they attempt to be a working mother and feel like they have failed as either a mother, a worker, or perhaps, even in both realms. Crittendon believes that the sense of failure women feel comes from the restraint of societal expectations and structures.

Interestingly, early Baby Boomers led the women's movement in the 1960s, and they were the first generation of women employed *en mass*. However, this generation of women experienced declining fertility rates as they sought to combine work and family (García-Manglano, 2015). Earlier generations paved the way for women to “have it all.” Women want both work *and* family. However, if responsibilities at home did not diminish (or were not shared) when a woman chose to work outside the home, she was forced to figure out how to accomplish her duties at work and at home within the boundaries of the same 24-hour day. As comedian Lily Tomlin quipped, “If I had known what it would be like to have it all, I might have been willing to settle for less.” The balancing act of work and family for women shapes a different work experience than for men.

The opt-out revolution. Women struggle to prioritize work and family and sacrifice in different ways, as evidenced by what journalist Lisa Belkin termed the “opt-out revolution” (2003). Scholars subsequently investigated the “opt-out” group of women and found that the issue is much more complex (Jones, 2012; Moe & Shandy, 2010). Five years after Belkin coined the term, she wrote her a New York Times column on work-life balance concluding that “there were no answers—just endless and penetrating questions” (Belkin, 2008). Moe and Shandy (2010) echoed that their work

simply charted a path through the complexity of the work and family struggles for women but did not offer a remedy to the problem.

Looking at the wider societal context, women are influenced by a variety of factors when making decisions about work, including cultural expectations about parenting and limited child care options. Jones (2012) reviewed the history of women, work, and motherhood in American history. Women want sustainable ways to combine work and family. But, when confronted with the realities of doing both, women may feel forced to abandon one or the other. For educated women, *opting out* is a “response to obstacles to the integration of work and family, not a ‘choice’ among viable options” (Jones, 2012, p.50). If opting out is a response to the environment, then the social environment must be better understood. Yet, from this perspective, women who leave the workplace are not *opting out* but rather are being *pushed out* by a work environment that is hostile to women, children, and the demands of family life. Jones (2012) argues that employees’ career aspirations are a function of the interaction between the individual and environmental factors.

In order to understand how employees’ career aspirations may change over time, factors must be considered at a sociocultural level, at an institutional level, and at an individual level.

Among sociologists of gender...aversion exists to explanations that assert a causal role for socialized preferences on the supply side of labor markets. I respectfully disagree; I believe that continuous gendered socialization affects taken-for-granted assumptions (e.g., which jobs we even consider), identities, and preferences. Outside social forces change our insides. Rather than eschewing socialization explanations in fear that they will be used to blame the victim, I believe we should point out that people did not choose the constraining social forces that formed their preferences, identities, and assumptions...and that even if they chose their jobs, they were not always aware of and certainly do not prefer the low pay in those jobs. (England, 2011, pp. 116-117)

England (2011) makes powerful claims that people are products of their societal upbringing, their experiences, their corner of the world. As a result, women are limited by the social norms that have shaped their own expectations and aspirations. The work that has been done in this area focuses on women in the workforce at large, but the confluence of women, motherhood, and *academic* leadership suggests a need for cultural change.

Deviant behavior. Émile Durkheim first introduced the idea of deviance, reasoning that deviance is an effect of social functions and dysfunctions (Durkheim, 1912). According to Durkheim, deviant behavior plays an active, constructive role in society by ultimately helping to cohere different populations within a particular society. “A society probably needs deviants because, as long as some members are considered deviants by the rest of society, attempts to control them set boundaries of acceptable, expected behavior for all other members” (Cuff & Payne, 1984, p.60). Thus, deviance is viewed as a way for society to change over time—including *positive* deviance that leads to positive change. However, deviance may not be recognized as positive until after a new equilibrium has been achieved.

Women have operated in the domestic sphere for all of recorded history, so for women to break into the professional sphere has required behavior that can be considered socially deviant. Structural functionalists believe that society will adjust for deviance or changes and return to a state of equilibrium. After the deviant behavior of women entering the workplace, theorists would hypothesize a *new* equilibrium for society. Sociologist Gosta Esping-Andersen, however, believes the current situation is an *incomplete revolution*, which he describes as women’s life course becoming increasingly

masculinized and leading to disequilibria in family (2009). Despite significant shifts for women, cultural norms have not yet caught up—equilibrium has not been achieved (Esping-Andersen, 2009). The ramifications of this disequilibrium include that the actions of women in the workplace and even more so as leaders is viewed as behavior that deviates from social norms and expectations. When behavior is viewed as deviant by members of society, less people act in this way because people innately desire affirmation and approval (Cuff & Payne, 1984). Although deviance can change culture, potential leaders need development and support.

Nurture

Nurturing women into leadership positions includes having models, mentors, and leadership training. Each of these components has been found to be particularly important for women to advance professionally. However, scholars agree that the traditional notions of development need to be revisited (Friday, 2014; Ibarra, Carter, & Silva, 2010).

Mentorship for women. To support the next generation of leaders, formal leadership development programs and informal mentorship relationships have been created and promoted fostered by both men and women in power (Brewer, 2016). The process of mentorship in which one person, usually someone in a more senior position, guides the development of an entry-level individual is a recurring influence in advancement into leadership (Friday, 2014; Ibarra et al., 2010; Savage, Karp, & Logue, 2004). In fact, mentorship has been found as a key determinant in career success, advancement, and overall job satisfaction (Friday, 2014).

A World Economic Forum report that looked at corporate practices for gender diversity found that 59 percent of the companies offered mentoring and networking programs and 28 percent offered programs specifically for women (Ibarra et al., 2010). Though considerable time and resources have been invested in mentorship for women, sometimes explicitly to help retain the best female employees, the pipeline continues to “leak” mid-to-senior levels of women. In a 2008 Catalyst survey of over 4000 professionals, 83 percent of women and 76 percent of men reported that they had at least one mentor. Unfortunately, formal or organized mentorship relationships often do not promote personal and career growth (Chao, Walz, & Gardner, 1992; Fagenson-Eland, 1997; Ibarra et al., 2010).

Mentoring relationships are stronger when the mentor and mentee share values, experiences, and outlooks (Allen, Day, & Lentz, 2005). Additionally, mentoring early in one’s career influences the trajectory of career and personal life (Noe, Greenberger, & Wang, 2002). However, women may struggle to find a professional mentor — particularly to find the right mentor at the beginning of her career (Ibarra et al., 2010).

Sponsorship for women. Mentorship is an indispensable tool, but clearly not all mentoring relationships offer the same quality of professional support. A nuance of mentorship called *sponsorship* has been found to be a critical link for professional success for women. Ibarra, Carter, and Silva (2010) suggest a nuanced understanding of mentorship:

All mentoring is not created equal, we discovered. There is a special kind of relationship—called sponsorship—in which the mentor goes beyond giving feedback and advice and uses his or her influence with senior executives to advocate for the mentee. Our interviews and surveys alike suggest that high-potential women are overmentored and undersponsored relative to their male

peers—and that they are not advancing in their organizations. Furthermore, without sponsorship, women not only are less likely than men to be appointed to top roles but may also be more reluctant to go for them. (Ibarra et al., 2010)

Other researchers describe the difference in terms of psychosocial and vocational functions (Mullen, 1998). Mentors who fulfill the psychosocial function care for the relationship and the personal parts of the life of their mentee, but a psychosocial mentor falls short of providing professional and practical advice. Psychosocial support, which generally happens more naturally among women, focuses on self-confidence and professional identity—providing counseling, role modeling, and friendship (Kram, 1985; Noe, 1988). Vocational support helps others advance in their career and guides them through processes—providing sponsorship, exposure, and coaching. Vocational or technical knowledge aligns more with Ibarra et al.’s description of sponsorship (2010).

If sponsorship is known to be an asset for women, what keeps women from accessing a sponsor? According to a report from the Center for Talent Innovation (CTI), women underestimate the professional value of sponsorship (Hewlett, Peraino, Sherbin, & Sumberg, 2010). Women who do see sponsorship as a tool for advancement struggle to cultivate it effectively. In the report, Hewlett et al. (2010) define “The Sponsor Effect” as a mentor who advocates for a mentee by connecting the mentee to people in their own network, praising and promoting the work of the mentee, creating career opportunities, and giving logistical and practical advice. “Mentors proffer friendly advice. Sponsors pull you up to the next level” (Hewlett et al., 2010). The “Sponsor Effect” calls out the mindset of women who continue to believe that hard work alone will help them advance. The notion of sponsorship suggests that women, like men, need a person who will connect them to the next promotion—hard work alone will not get them there (Friday,

2014; Hewlett et al., 2010). Women at companies that offer sponsorship programs are able to gain a competitive advantage (Friday, 2014; Hewlett et al., 2010). Sponsorship is one of the specific ways individuals progress in the workplace and can be a path to promotions and career satisfaction.

Statement of the Problem

The role of women in domestic and workforce spheres has changed significantly over the last century, but it would be a mistake to conclude that a new day has dawned for women in the work force and women in higher education in particular. One is tempted to think that fostering a women-friendly legal, corporate, and educational context would naturally generate women deans, provosts, and presidents, but a deeper look at the literature reveals this is not the case (American Council on Education, 2016b; Mason, Wolfinger, & Goulden, 2013; Ward & Wolf-Wendel, 2012). Not only do gender discrimination and barriers still exist, but also the presence of a large number of women in the academic pipeline does not necessarily lead to women in leadership in higher education. In fact, the dearth of women leaders in higher education is notable and begs questions as to why and where the occlusion is occurring that prevents a normal flow in the pipeline. In other words, what is keeping women who are mid-level academic administrators from becoming senior academic administrators?

This study provides a new approach using the three strands of structure, culture, and nurture to better understand the expectations and experiences of women leaders in the academy. First, current organizational structure in many settings resists and undermines women's efforts to combine work and family. Second, organizational culture discourages women from deviating out of traditional gender norms. Third, organizational

nurture motivates women and prepares them to be leaders. Thus, the primary focus of this study is to investigate what role structure, culture, and nurture play in women's experiences in academic leadership. Toward the same end, this study will ask:

1. How does the sequencing of work and family influence women's experiences of leadership in higher education?
2. How do women academic leaders perceive and respond to the cultural norms?
3. Do women academic leaders describe an experience of sponsorship? If so, how?

Significance

In his book "How Colleges Work," Robert Birnbaum (1988) offers the helpful example of "the black box." Birnbaum used the analogy of a black box with a crank to explain a loosely-coupled system in which causes and effects are not clearly linked. When the crank is turned, the gears turn the rotor, but sometimes the gears turn the rotor clockwise and other times it is counterclockwise. The black box is unpredictable since one cannot see inside the box, so the process of causation, and therefore the outcome, is unpredictable. The loosely-coupled university is made up of smaller systems, like gears, that have independent goals and may or may not line up with the goal of the overall system (Birnbaum, 1988). Similarly, the academic pipeline operates like a black box with loose gears. Women in higher education have competing goals between work and family, and other variables like lack of sponsorship or deviant behavior seem to affect the output, that is, women becoming leaders. Although the pipeline seems unpredictable, additional exploration into the influences on women's persistence could provide much needed insight for all who are in the academic pipeline—whether entering, exiting, or transitioning somewhere in between.

Limitations and Delimitations

The phenomenological methodology of this qualitative research project results in both chosen and imposed limitations. This study is limited by the project duration and the availability of resources, which constrains the number of participants and the time with participants. The body of literature already offers explanations for the slow advancement of women. However, the academic pipeline continues to perplex scholars, researchers, and women alike. Further exploration, even within the limits of time and human resources, can help us explore a more meaningful understanding of what is happening inside of the pipeline (Birnbaum, 1988).

The study was intentionally designed as a qualitative study for exploration of participants' meaning-making and is accompanied by self-imposed limitations. Though the college or university presidency can be reached from numerous different pathways, the participant group was limited to target women in academic leadership positions that are traditionally the most common pathways to the presidency (academic deans, provosts, vice presidents, or chief academic officers) (Wheat, 2012). Lastly, focusing on the confluence of structure, culture, and nurture of women academic leaders rather than general leadership principles, focuses the conceptual scope of the study and channels the research toward discovering fresh perspectives and meaning.

CHAPTER TWO

Literature Review

Timeless and relevant, established and inventive, diverse and cohesive: higher education represents a longstanding enterprise known for the tense co-existence, if not dynamic interplay between opposing values. The university is both praised and ridiculed for its slow-moving operative style. At times, this insulation serves the university well by sheltering its' students from ephemeral social trends and its employees from the whims of boards and policymakers. But, in other ways, the university needs to be more responsive to important sustained societal shifts. Originally developed without consideration for the participation of women, institutions of higher education are now characterized by a majority of women undergraduate and graduate students and an increasing number of women faculty and staff.

The shift in institutional composition has occurred in the last half century, and the upward trend of women's involvement in higher education looks to be a continuing trend (U.S. Department of Labor, 2013). Still, as a woman navigates the higher education workplace, work and family compete for her attention. Many educated and qualified women have been unable to reconcile the competing demands and opted out of work altogether, referred to as the "opt-out revolution" (Belkin, 2003). Others, rather than opting out entirely, sacrifice career advancement in order to work the second shift at home (Jones, 2012; Moe & Shandy, 2010). Still other women deviate from traditional female career paths and persevere into male-dominated leadership positions. Although

the cultural expectations for women are shifting, the role of men has not changed at the same pace. American society as a whole, and higher education in particular, is in a state of disequilibrium (Esping-Andersen, 2009).

Ultimately, this study seeks to distinguish the patterns formed through these three strands (structure, culture, and nurture) in women's career strategies and expectations in academic leadership. The literature on working women shows a struggle to prioritize multiple roles within work and family life; however, this struggle needs further exploration within the higher education context—specifically for senior leaders (Moe & Shandy, 2010; Ward & Wolf-Wendel, 2012). Although research has identified structural and cultural barriers that further complicate negotiations, the field does not yet understand the experiences of women at the confluence of structure, culture, and nurture.

Access

Working in Higher Education

The growing percentage of educated women is not reflected by the percentage of women in leadership in the academy. The higher the faculty rank the fewer women one finds. In fact, female professors outnumber male professors at lower faculty ranks, but from assistant professors to associate professors to full professors, men outnumber women. However, men are more than twice as likely to hold a full professor position (National Center for Education Statistics, 2016a). As of 2013, women held nearly half of total faculty positions but just 38 percent of tenured faculty positions (Finkelstein et al., 2016). Less than a decade ago, the percentage of tenured faculty members who were women had not substantially changed in over a decade even as the women in the pipeline swelled (Evans & Grant, 2008). The lack of progress for women (especially those with

children) as tenured faculty members has been explored by several scholars who have compiled the experiences of various women faculty. Women who attained tenure-track positions reported slower advancement, less pay, and less satisfaction as compared to male faculty members (Evans & Grant, 2008).

Not only were women lagging behind statistically, they were emotionally unfulfilled as they sought to combine academic work and family life. The literature suggests that women faculty's ownership of the second shift cause women to struggle to live in the tension between work and family life (Evans & Grant, 2008; Ghodsee & Connelly, 2014; Ward & Wolf-Wendel, 2012). Thus, one of the primary inhibitors for women's access to working as faculty members is navigating the combination of academic work and family life. Even so, research on work and family prioritization emphasizes that women will continue to combine faculty work and family life (Evans & Grant, 2008; Ghodsee & Connelly, 2014; Ward & Wolf-Wendel, 2012).

Through a longitudinal research study of over 100 women, Ward and Wolf-Wendel expanded the literature on the journeys of women professors who have children and how they prioritized work and family at different career stages in their book, *Academic Motherhood* (2012). Women faculty on the tenure track were assessed on their management of work and family in their early careers (pre-tenure), when their children were young (under the age of five), and in mid-career (post-tenure) when their children were older. The findings revealed that there is not a one-size-fits-all solution for prioritizing family and faculty work. One of the major conclusions of the study is that entry into the pipeline does not automatically lead to advancement and promotion, which aligns with other research (Ward & Wolf-Wendel, 2012). Consistently, qualitative

research finds that women who desire to combine work and family “make it work” (Evans & Grant, 2008; Ghodsee & Connelly, 2014; Ward & Wolf-Wendel, 2012). However, women use a myriad of strategies to persist in the workplace—there is no proscribed one-size-fits-all method.

With a slightly different perspective, Mason, Wolfinger, and Goulden take a comprehensive approach to discuss the changing landscape of academic work and family life in their book, *Do Babies Matter?* (2013). Through evaluating the career paths of faculty members, the study focuses more on the relationship between family formation and the academic careers of men and women. Mason et al. also acknowledge that there are problems in the academic pipeline. Even with a majority of women in the academy, the study found that women are not progressing in the professoriate or into senior leadership roles at parallel rates to their male peers—confirming the results of other research (American Council on Education, 2016b; Mason et al., 2013). Through the analysis of faculty who have children and those who do not, they find that specifically motherhood is a factor in lowering women’s wages and career advancement. For men, marriage and fatherhood improve their perception in the academy (Mason et al., 2013). Similarly, Ward and Wolf-Wendel’s (2012) study found that scholarly production does not decrease for men when they become fathers, but when women become mothers, there is a distinct decline in professional production. Research indicates that female faculty members are stalled professionally in order to maintain family life—a struggle not equally experienced by male faculty members.

Drawing on over a decade of research, college and university structures have obviously not kept up with the shifts in the needs of their employees (Evans & Grant,

2008; Ghodsee & Connelly, 2014; Mason et al., 2013; Ward & Wolf-Wendel, 2012). For example, the younger generation working in the academy has a unique set of expectations and values—specifically prizing flexibility in the workplace and work-life balance (Mason et al., 2013). Obsolete university structures seem to be a relevant concern considering that work-life balance appears to be the primary hurdle for women’s career advancement in the academy. Ultimately, the literature draws similar conclusions about the need for improved policies, updated structures, and reformed culture within higher education. Although researchers have offered insight into the experiences of women in the academy, studies have focused primarily on women faculty, which has not sufficiently illuminated how women make sense of and navigate work-life issues and administrative work.

Leading in Higher Education

Less than one-third of college presidents are women, and only 8 percent of women presidents lead doctorate-granting institutions (ACE, 2017). Again, increased access for women does not equate to women attaining the same positions as men in higher education. Few researchers have investigated how women leaders in the academy prioritize work and family; however, reports have found that women presidents are “less likely to be married, less likely to have children, and more likely to have altered their career for family” (American Council on Education, 2016b, p. 11). This paints a picture that having a family is not compatible with senior leadership in higher education—that is, for women.

Although *Academic Motherhood* focused on faculty, the authors include a notable finding about women faculty’s interest in career advancement: many of the mid-level

faculty members had sacrificed a great deal to achieve tenure and seemed worn out (Ward and Wolf-Wendel, 2012). Thus, these women had no desire to progress into administrative positions even if they were already performing higher-level administrative tasks.

Given the fairly high levels of involvement in service or what we would call 'quasi-administration' (Ward, 2003), we were surprised by the limited number of faculty women who had administrative aspirations beyond the programmatic level, since they were already engaged in administrative work (even if it was labeled as service). In part, this was based on the participants' concern about how to manage family responsibilities, given the additional workload associated with administration and promotion. It will be interesting to see if these aspirations shift as program responsibilities increase and children get older. (Ward & Wolf-Wendel, 2012, pp. 72–73)

These findings express the joy women get from combining work and family life.

However, little is known about the influences and pressures of work and family prioritization on women leaders in higher education (Ward & Wolf-Wendel, 2012).

Current research focuses on women faculty, but more research is needed to see if the same barriers are experienced by women *senior leaders* in the academy.

Women administrators admit that they allow personal life to influence professional decisions (Wheat, 2012). From interviews and field analysis of women administrators, Wheat (2012) studied their career paths and leadership aspirations. However, the way women interpreted their decision-making was not central to the study and warrants further exploration.

Nurture in higher education leadership. Several studies have explored the barriers and keys to success for women leaders in higher education in an effort to pass along wisdom to the next generation of women (Batte, 2015; Langford, 2010; Santee, 2006). One of the recurring factors for success for women leaders is the presence of a

support network or mentor (Santee, 2006). In Santee's (2006) study, all of the participants attributed their success to a supportive network. Although the particular source of support varied, each participant shared about the positive influence of support or mentorship. However, barriers that these leaders had overcome were also central to these studies. Through interviews with 20 senior-level administrators at Southern Baptist colleges and universities (SBCUs), Langford (2010) confirmed the dearth of women leaders and the presence of traditional barriers as well as additional barriers specific to SBCUs. Women presidents were found to foster institutional cultures that welcomed women in leadership (Langford, 2010). In Batte's (2015) study of fourteen women presidents from a variety of institutional types, the findings showed similarly that women are collaborative and authentic leaders. However, the study also showed that women's reluctance to be leaders created a barrier to their own success, which was not the first time this barrier had surfaced in the literature (Batte, 2015).

Women administrators in the academy have described their struggles in senior leadership positions (Fitzgerald, 2013). The accounts brought together the women's uncertainties and doubts and the innate contradictions within the culture. Institutional culture emerged as a key tool for encouraging or limiting women leaders. One of the participants wrote, "it is important to show how women leaders lead and act in the quiet spaces" and to "create opportunities for women to think about what is possible and permissible" (Fitzgerald, 2013, p. 3). Women leaders need opportunities and space to connect with other women to discuss how to prioritize work and family. Fitzgerald (2013) explains:

Paradoxically, although many universities host research centres or institutes and acclaim the intellectual contribution of academics engaged in research in the areas

of gender, work and organizations, they appear to turn a deaf ear and a blind eye to this work when examining the institution itself. The continuous underrepresentation of women at senior levels and the numerical dominance of men ought to be a clear and public signal that there is a serious and persistent problem to be confronted. (p. 97)

The literature repeatedly suggests that higher education leadership is not only statistically dominated by males, but it is also a male-oriented culture. As women seek increased access to leadership positions in higher education, a deeper understanding of their particular expectations and experiences is essential for appropriately reconfiguring structure, culture, and nurture.

Cultural Norms

Women seem to pay a price for being different, but what defines what is normal for women is less clear. Structural Functionalism is a sociological approach that looks at society from a macro-level perspective, by broadly focusing on the interdependence of social structures, which contribute to the functioning of society as a whole (Cuff & Payne, 1984; Durkheim, 1912). This orientation endeavors to explain social structures as collective ways to meet individual and social needs. The concept of structural functionalism, then, is a cycle of equilibrium and disequilibrium—adapting to social needs, integrating society through common values, and then finding a new equilibrium.

As the role of the woman changes in America, society seeks a new equilibrium (Esping-Andersen, 2009). Throughout this process, American culture continues to place certain expectations on women and their roles in society, as discussed in the introductory chapter (Hochschild, 1989; Jones, 2012; Moe & Shandy, 2010). Also, higher education culture places a particular set of expectations on its' employees—a set originally structured for men rather than women (“Barriers and Bias,” 2016; Shakeshaft, 1989).

These expectations compound to put enormous pressure on women working in the academy to navigate their multiple roles. “There are three main areas of tension through the various levels of academia for women in juggling family and work: the demands of home, the demands of work, and cultural expectations” (DeRoche & Berger, 2017, p. 3). More likely than not, women must live in the tension rather than find a work-life balance.

The Ideal Worker and the Greedy Institution

Part of the discrepancy for women in the workplace has to do with cultural ideals about the definition of a good worker. The American notion of the ideal worker is the view of the good employee who works at least forty hours a week every week (but two) of the year. But, as women entered the labor force in mass, the norm, though obsolete, was not adjusted. “This ideal-worker norm, framed around the traditional life patterns of men, excludes most mothers of childbearing age” (Williams, 2000, p. 2). Shaped by the stereotypical married man with a supportive wife at home, the ideal worker is an outdated idea, but it persists as the default standard for good work. Examining the experiences of academic leaders, Wilk addresses whether the ideal worker model pervades expectations in higher education (2016). Her findings suggest that administrators feel pressure to be the ideal worker or work even more than forty hours a week. Today, women (and men) feel pressure to conform to this inflexible view of the worker even when daily routines, not to mention technology, have changed. Some companies have offered flexible schedules and have found increased productivity and morale (Williams, 2000). However, the cultural norm of the ideal worker remains, which is harmful to both men and women.

For women in the academy, the expectations can be even greater than the *ideal worker* norm because higher education has been found to be a *greedy institution* (Ward &

Wolf-Wendel, 2012). Lewis Coser suggested that a greedy institution is one that demands total commitment and full attention (1974). Work in higher education is touted for its flexibility, but flexibility becomes synonymous with around-the-clock work—the effects of working for a greedy institution. The ideal faculty member is married to her work, especially in her pretenure years. As long as women are childless, women match men in participation and productivity in the work force, which confirms that the glass ceiling no longer blocks all women from leadership (Hymowitz, 2004; Moe & Shandy, 2010). But, with the addition of children, women lag behind men. This may be because motherhood can also be “greedy” due to the all-encompassing demands of children. Attention to children competes with focus at work and presents a hurdle for women. In fact, both motherhood *and* academic work are “greedy institutions” and demand complete commitment. So, women who have children and work in the academy live in the tension between two groups that require full dedication without sufficient resources to do both.

Women with children generally, but especially in higher education, have to work a second shift at home, so the high commitment to academic work combined with high commitments at home cause women to be less likely than men to seek greater responsibility in the forms of senior leadership roles (Ward & Wolf-Wendel, 2012). In fact, women are statistically more likely than men to adjust their career for their family—another way women’s reluctance to lead is evidenced (American Council on Education, 2016a). Almost half of women say they consider family balance issues when making a big career decision (Moe & Shandy, 2010). Women allow family responsibilities to modify their work responsibilities while men are more likely to let work responsibilities alter their domestic responsibilities.

Women in a Male-Dominated Culture

Despite the increasing number of women with advanced degrees, women faculty remain grouped in the lower ranks: part-time adjunct instructors, non-tenured assistant professors, and associate professor (Collins, 1998; Finkelstein et al., 2016). Among all ranks of tenure track, tenured, and senior administrative-level faculty, men outnumber women (Finkelstein et al., 2016; Venessa, 2012). Some scholars attribute this difference to a lack of leadership development programs that uniquely prepare women for careers in the academy (Bayer, 2012; Ibarra et al., 2010, 2013). Even leadership training is designed with men in mind, so women who are certified still lack important skills that they were never taught and networks that they never gained (Ibarra et al., 2010).

Although women are mentored, they often lack the same opportunity for connection and empowerment as men who are mentored—what some call *sponsorship*. If women are to make the successful transition into administrative leadership, the field needs a more complete understanding of the function of nurture, which the concept of sponsorship in part provides.

Models for women and leadership aspirations. Studies show uncertainties and contradictions surrounding ideas of women in leadership (Gallant, 2014; Ibarra et al., 2010; Terry, 2016). Through interviews with women seeking higher education leadership positions, Gallant (2014) analyzed viewpoints of leadership and allowed participants to self-identify their potential for promotion at their institution. Additionally, Gallant had the participants attend a leadership program designed to bolster their leadership skills. The women explained how they recognized a leader and interacted with those in leadership. Through their responses, gender emerged in how they talked about

leaders and themselves (Gallant, 2014). Women discounted their experiences and placed value on formal leadership training. Gallant found that not only are there systemic flaws but also the mindset of women is preventing their own upward mobility. For instance, women participants attributed meaning differently when viewing another leader than when acting as the leader. Women, even those on track to leadership positions, struggled to visualize themselves as leaders—drawing on gendered norms to construct notions of leadership.

Many people do not see the impact female leadership has on other women, noted Dr. Suzanne Shipley, President of Midwestern State University (Terry, 2016).

“Sometimes when you keep seeing someone in a role that doesn’t match you, you wonder whether you can do it. Now there were men who helped me and there are men who help women, but sometimes you need to see a woman doing the job to believe you can do it” (Terry, 2016). Research shows that same-sex role models are crucial for females but not for males. “Women cannot envision patterning themselves after men, either because they identify men’s behavior as ‘male’ and therefore incongruent with their ‘female’ self-images, or because male behavior is inappropriate for them” (Shakeshaft, 1989, p. 115). In *Student Success in Colleges* (2010), there is another glimpse of the effects of women role models:

The female-dominated environments of Alverno and Sweet Briar are powerful and affirming, surrounding their students with intelligent women in positions of authority. The effect on intellectual self-esteem is palpable. As one Alverno senior said, “It’s given a huge boost to my confidence, my belief in myself and what I can do.” (Kuh, Kinzie, Schuh, & Whitt, 2010, p. 257)

Remarkably, although the majority of college students are women, the same proportional representation is not seen at senior leadership levels causing a lack of models for women.

Without a sufficient supply of role models, women struggle against institutional norms and cultural expectations (Fitzgerald, 2013; Gipson, Pfaff, Mendelsohn, Catenacci, & Burke, 2017). “For women, the development of a leader identity can be challenging because they must display the characteristics necessary for leadership without violating prescriptive norms about their gender” (Gipson et al., 2017, p. 40). Cultural norms emerge as invisible but palpable barriers for women as they struggle to operate within what is considered acceptable.

The hierarchy in higher education has traditionally been dominated by male academics, which structurally hampers access for women academics. Customarily, perspectives of academic leaders came from a professor’s authority in teaching, research, and scholarship. Today, senior leaders are not always sourced from the professoriate; instead, institutions often recruit business-minded leaders (Beardsley, 2017). Even so, senior administration in colleges and universities continues to be dominated by males. Females who want to work in this environment are subject to competing demands. Women are expected to be feminine without intruding on the male culture, but women feel the pressure to support the status quo (Connell, 2006). This is a difficult position to reconcile. This leads women to act more masculine or women to act *too* feminine; either way they struggle to *fit* into departments with a tradition of male dominance.

One tactic researchers have noted women employ is termed “smile work” (Tierney & Bensimon, 1996, p. 83). “Smile work” is described as a “culturally imposed strategy” women use for “symbolic management of behavior to present oneself as being pleasant and agreeable” (Tierney & Bensimon, 1996, p. 83). Thus, opportunity for career progression for women is usually espoused in higher education, but the structure does not

always support women through this process (Cohn, 2009). Any female involvement shifts the cultural dynamic causing unwanted disruption. This develops a view of women as the organizational “other” since they differ from males at the same level yet they also differ from female subordinates (Fitzgerald, 2013). Thus, current policies and practices discourage women from deviating from traditional gender norms.

Mentorship in higher education. To support women leaders, formal leadership development programs and informal mentorship relationships are being fostered by both men and women in power (Brewer, 2016). The literature on mentorship in higher education has inordinately focused on mentoring new and particularly minority faculty (Friday, 2014). Mentors play an influential role in socializing scholars to the academic environment. Plus, mentors can support and guide new colleagues toward professional networks useful for career advancement. Studies show a positive relationship between mentorship and personal and professional development—including academic productivity, career satisfaction, and retention (Lewellen-Williams et al., 2006; Sambunjak, Straus, & Marusić, 2006).

For women administrators in higher education, researchers have found that mentoring aids in career development and advancement (Armenti, 2004; Gibson, 2005; Kellerman & Rhode, 2007; Madsen, 2008; Rabas, 2013; Touchton, Musil, & Campbell, 2008). For the fortunate women who have had mentors, mentorship improves productivity, communication skills, and professionalism (Dodds, 2005). However, many women have suffered from the lack of mentorship—especially those with aspirations for senior leadership in higher education. Significantly more men than women (roughly half) are encouraged by a mentor to pursue advancement (Paulus et al., 2016). Women need

this same type of support. In one of the few studies that has looked at the impact of mentorship on senior college administrators, Lindsay (1999) interviewed women working as senior college administrators. Although a few women identified their mothers as their mentors, all of the women lamented that they had not had professional mentoring relationships.

Sponsorship in higher education. Awareness is growing about sponsorship in higher education. In March 2016, the American Association of University Women (AAUW) published *Barriers and Bias*, a report that deals with the factors perpetuating the gender leadership gap and provides suggestions for countering the status quo. The report summarizes the limited research and highlights the statistics that contrasts the large pool of qualified women with the majority of men in leadership positions. AAUW looks at the systemic issues preventing women's upward mobility. *Barriers and Bias* (2016) directly addresses the issues of sex discrimination and stereotyping, maintaining that these issues are still occurring. Issues of preparing and supporting women are addressed as well and resources are available on the AAUW website.

Mentorship involves experienced professionals serving as role models and providing career or academic advice. One step beyond mentorship is sponsorship, where the professional uses their personal or professional leverage to advance your career. Accessibility to influential mentors and sponsors helps cultivate the next generation of women leaders. ("Barriers and Bias," 2016)

Beyond the AAUW report, the group offers specific resources on their webpage tailored for three groups (individuals, employers and policy makers) to be the agents of change toward gender parity. For employers, there are links to learn more about how to use sponsorship to support women.

The AAUW is not the only group promoting sponsorship of women. The American Council on Education (ACE) is investigating inequity of leadership specifically in higher education. The work of ACE is gaining national momentum as groups are looking for effective strategies to support women. “As presidents, we must offer our sponsorship and mentorship and recognize that every presidential vacancy is an opportunity to advance women,” said ACE President Molly Corbett Broad in regards to the group’s “Moving the Needle: Advancing Women in Higher Education Leadership” campaign. The campaign was launched in January 2016 to raise national awareness about the importance of achieving gender equity in higher education leadership and offering strategies to support and advance women. Strong mentorship and sponsorship are recognized as effective tools for academic career advancement, and both are less available to women.

A summary of the historical context for women in higher education affirms that while the system of American higher education has experienced incredible growth over the last century, male-dominated norms, values, standards, and expectations remain unchallenged. As Zaleski found:

Unless leaders of higher education institutions purposefully aim at reexamining the higher-education conventional male practices and standards, together with society’s gendered views about women and men, women in the profession will continue to experience numerous societal, institutional, interpersonal, and personal barriers to success. (2013, p. 52)

And so, the conversation turns to how to affect change in higher education culture. The idea of social deviance offers one way to explain the expressed cultural disequilibrium, and in particular, deviance may illuminate a woman leader’s experience within her institutional culture.

Social Deviance

The key processes for achieving equilibrium in any social structure are socialization and social control. Talcott Parsons (1951) emphasized societal values as part of socialization, believing that humans naturally seek after gratification and approval. From Parsons' perspective, individuals want to learn and conform to the values, norms, and expectations of society. It logically follows that those who have been inadequately socialized and are not committed to the values and norms of society are considered deviants (Parsons, 1951). "Deviance is defined in terms of the dominant value system and is seen as a pathological state" (Cuff & Payne, 1984, p. 47). Within society, deviance can disrupt equilibrium in the social system and may require intervention. Other theorists continued to develop this concept of deviance.

Robert K. Merton saw the work of Parsons as too ambitious and impractical, so he sought to bring methodology to the abstract theory. Without using the terms, Merton implies that deviant responses appear when the whole social system is in a state of disequilibrium (Merton, 1957). The idea of deviance provides a way to address the changes experienced in society. Émile Durkheim first introduced the idea of deviance, reasoning that deviance is an effect of social functions and dysfunctions (Durkheim, 1912). According to Durkheim, deviant behavior plays an active, constructive role in society by ultimately helping to cohere different populations within a particular society. "A society probably needs deviants because, as long as some members are considered deviants by the rest of society, attempts to control them set boundaries of acceptable, expected behavior for all other members" (Cuff & Payne, 1984, p.60).

Peterson (2002) conducted a study to examine how organizational factors, particularly ethical climates, relate to deviant behavior. Certain types of ethical climates were found to relate to specific types of deviant behavior, which suggests that the type of deviance may depend on the cause or situational trigger (Peterson, 2002). These results show the theoretical relevance of deviance, and the study demonstrates the situational nature of deviance. Based on the ethical climate, individual behavior will be influenced by a different set of norms and moral boundaries. As Peterson (2002) found, a particular behavior may not be defined as deviant within one workplace, but it still can be labeled as deviant in a workplace with a different ethical climate.

Thus, deviance helps to distinguish between acceptable and unacceptable behavior. It draws lines and defines boundaries. This is an important function that affirms the cultural values and norms of a society for the members of that society (Durkheim, 1982). In addition to clarifying the moral boundaries of society, deviant behavior can also promote social unity as the community rallies against deviant individuals.

Deviance stems out of structural functionalism, as a way to explain dysfunctional behavior in a society. The concept of deviance offers a method for social change and promotes equilibrium in conjunction with structural functionalism (Cuff & Payne, 1984). For women who act outside of the norms and climb the administrative ladder in higher education, deviance could provide an explanation for their behavior. However, deviance provides insight into the behavior of women administrators and how women function within the college or university setting.

Deviance and Social Change

Deviance is seen as a mechanism of societal change over time—including *positive* deviance that leads to positive change. Though this idea is a seemingly antithetical juxtaposition of terms, the concept of positive deviance importantly preserves that this behavior, whether for good or bad ends, deviates from the status quo (Parsons, 1951). Deviant behavior can cause social disequilibrium, but society will naturally make adjustments to normalize. In the case of positive deviance, society changes. With new norms in response to deviance, the deviant behavior can contribute to long-term social stability (Merton, 1957). An obvious example of positive deviance in history is the civil rights movement. The claims and behavior of those who participated in this social movement were to end racial segregation and discrimination against African Americans, which was the norm in America at the time. Eventually, these actions led to legal recognition and federal protection of their rights as citizens, and positive change was accomplished—shifting into a new norms.

One case study by Zaleski (2013) sought to understand the influence of culture on women's career success due to the unusually high number of women administrators at that college. The university selected for the case study had fifteen women administrators serving with one male college president. Using the positive deviance approach, two factors accounted for the success of women within this environment: shared values and a positive organizational climate for women (Zaleski, 2013). Women expressed that they felt they were taking risks, but the structure and culture were found to be encouraging and supportive to women. Zaleski (2013) chose this unique setting, which certainly does not have the cultural norms of typical colleges and universities. Further research could apply

this across different institutional types to examine the role of deviance in higher education.

Deviance and Social Equilibrium

Deviance has two primary functions in maintaining social equilibrium. One function is that reward and punishment for deviance develop norms and influence individuals in a society to behave according to acceptable (or unacceptable) behavior, as evidenced in Hughes and Coakley's (1991) study. People operate within their understanding of what actions are considered deviant.

The other function is that these boundaries that develop create social divides within society. At the cost of the deviant members of society, the majority segment of the population will unite around what is considered normal. "A disturbance from the environment becomes manifested in behaviour when someone either cannot or will not fulfill the obligations expected of him [or *her*] in a particular role" (Bailey, 1969, p. 194). In *Strategems and Spoils*, Bailey (1969) identified the role of the specific environment on the effects of deviant behavior—whether deviance results in change or not. He clarified this as via two types: *repetitive change*, which occurs when an act outside of the norms results in a return to the status quo; and, *radical change*, which occurs when an act outside of the norms results in new normative rules and the environment changes (Bailey, 1969, p. 197). When radical change occurs within a society, deviant individuals may have found camaraderie among others in society like them to create more momentum toward new normative rules.

In fact, groups can form around a stigmatized identity. The literature on motherhood and work in the academy shows a community of women developing around

an identity that is perceived by society, or at least the academic society, as exhibiting deviant behavior (Evans & Grant, 2008; Jones, 2012; Moe & Shandy, 2010). Although women may consider their own behavior to be deviant, many others involved in higher education would espouse the increased access of women to leadership. Transferring Bonilla-Silva's (2003) idea of "racism without racists" from racial inequality to gender inequality, persistent gender inequality fits the description of sexism without sexists. That is, gender discrimination still exists, even without the willful behavior of offenders. Even in the absence of overt gender discrimination, unintentional sexism or bias against women is still present within the system.

The discussion of deviance emerged as functionalists considered dysfunctional institutions. Both positive and negative deviance provide an insightful explanation for the reality of social change and the achievement (and search for) equilibrium. Understanding the concept of deviance from the structural functionalist foundation shows the necessity of deviant behavior by revealing a positive and productive role of deviance in society. In this study, I seek to discover if and how cultural norms affect women's personal expectations and experiences in the academy.

Summary

Much has been written about how women leaders face barriers to success, slow career advancement, and persistent gender discrimination. However, the confluence of the advancement of women leaders, work and family sequencing, and positive deviance offer a fresh perspective for evaluating the expectations and experiences of women academic leaders. The career paths of women senior leaders include cultural and structural roadblocks in higher education, suggesting that women have to stray from the

“normal” pathway in order to advance (Eagly & Carli, 2007). Until women are equally represented in senior academic leadership, research is needed to understand and interpret the experiences of women academic leaders and the ways organizational structure, culture, and nurture can best support them (Zaleski, 2013).

The historical barriers to women’s advancement into leadership positions, described variously as the glass ceiling, sticky floor, glass cliff, and maternal wall have been replaced by the concept of the labyrinth, which has been used to explain the diverse challenges women face (Eagly & Carli, 2007). Despite the persistent challenges, some women have laboriously *and* successfully climbed the ladder to senior leadership positions in higher education. Additionally, in the face of impending mass retirement among current college presidents, women have an immense opportunity to move into senior leadership positions (American Council on Education, 2017). Research suggests that women who are mentored, trained, empowered, and supported may be more ready to capitalize on this opportunity (Bayer, 2012; Ibarra et al., 2010, 2013). Colleges and universities continue to expect dominant and assertive leaders. Scholars suggest that the culture of the academy and in particular the administration promotes competition rather than collaboration, which tends to attract men more than women (Madden, 2005). Thus, societal roles for men and women continue to affect the opportunities available to women.

This dissertation seeks to explore the apparent anomalies in the literature about women’s experiences in leadership in higher education. The literature suggests every reason for large numbers of women to be progressing to positions of senior leadership, and yet that is not occurring. Women struggle to prioritize multiple roles within work

and family life while confronting and challenging structural and cultural barriers that further complicate their navigation of the path to academic administration. How the confluence of structure, culture, and nurture influence the lives of potential women leaders and affect their rise to power will be the focus of this study.

CHAPTER THREE

Methodology

Conceptual Framework

A compelling interest of this study is to make sense of the underlying influences for the advancement of women into leadership in higher education. My analysis is based on a structural functionalist perspective, a sociological tradition that focuses on factors that establish and maintain that is “normal” in a given society (Cuff & Payne, 1984; Durkheim, 1912). Structural functionalism pursues an understanding of the processes that perpetuate the status quo by focusing on the interdependence of social structures, which support the functioning of society. In this view, the process of maintaining social equilibrium occurs through meeting social needs, integrating individuals into the social values, facing disequilibrium and then returning to equilibrium (Merton, 1957; Parsons, 1951). In studying the contemporary shifts for women in higher education, I conceptualize deviance as a process that, through action and re-action, gradually produces social change, and may ultimately push society into a new equilibrium (Esping-Andersen, 2009). Rather than complying with structure, conforming to the culture, and considering participation in the available forms of nurture, women’s entrance into the work force, and particularly in the sphere of higher education, has been marked by creating disequilibria. The confluence of structure, culture, and nurture create a foundation for my approach to investigating, understanding, and interpreting the meaning-making of women in higher education within this social context. In the

following section, I will present my theoretical understanding of these three strands that provided the conceptual foundation for this study.

Convergence of Frameworks

The three conceptual strands join to provide a fresh look at the expectations and experiences of women academic leaders. Much of the story of women in the workforce has been woven together through previous research on women in leadership, women in the academy, working mothers, even *academic* motherhood. What remains to be understood is the confluence of structure, culture, and nurture for women leaders in the academy. Though the societal expectations placed on women, the persistent gender bias, and the barriers for women in the workforce will undoubtedly be interwoven in the discussion, this argument is knitted together by the context of higher education and three central strands: the role of policies and practices (structure), societal norms and deviance from them (culture), and available and appropriate supports (nurture).

Most issues do not neatly fit into one category. However, for the purpose of clear understanding and differentiation, I have separated the elements by best fit into one of the three categories. In Table 1, the three strands are broken down by the concepts included in each category, the behaviors that exemplify the elements, and a suggested theory for change. Even so, it would not be helpful to think of the categories as exclusive and bounded by their grouping. For example, gender discrimination is often discussed as a structural issue—one that can be addressed by improving policies and laws.

Table 3.1

Concepts, behaviors, and change in structure, culture, and nurture

Strand	Included Concepts	Manifested Behaviors	Suggested Theory for Change
Structure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Glass Ceiling/Cliff • Maternal Wall • Labyrinth 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gender Bias • Gender Discrimination 	Sequencing
Culture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gender Roles • Socialization • Second Shift 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work-Family Balance • Opt-Out Revolution 	Positive Deviance
Nurture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Modeling • Mentorship • Support 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leader Development • Networking 	Sponsorship

However, gender discrimination persists culturally even after policy and procedure has been updated. Similarly, gender discrimination may result from how a person was nurtured or the lack of positive nurture. Thus, gender discrimination is not solely a structural phenomenon. In an effort to more clearly define the included elements and the manifested behaviors, I will review each strand and explain the importance and function of the theory for enacting change.

Structure

The strand of structure focuses on barriers within a particular system (in this case, higher education organizations) that women encounter. Structural barriers have been identified as the primary obstacles in women’s upward mobility into positions of senior leadership (Johns, 2013). From the initial concept of the glass ceiling, subsequently to the glass cliff and the maternal wall and, ultimately, to the labyrinth, these analogies describe how structural barriers have shifted form and function, impeding women in the

workforce even as their access to leadership has increased. “To overcome structural barriers, employers need to establish flexible work arrangements and work-life balance policies, and create effective pipelines that identify, develop, and promote women” (Johns, 2013, p. 7). Much of the literature addresses the way that specific organizational policies and procedures constrain women and advocates for structural change (American Council on Education, 2012; “Barriers and Bias,” 2016; Carli & Eagly, 2016; Harlan & Berheide, 1994; Hymowitz, 2004; Jones, 2012; Moe & Shandy, 2010)(American Council on Education, 2012; “Barriers and Bias,” 2016; Carli & Eagly, 2016). In this study, I am interested in how a woman’s personal and professional choices are incompatible with current organizational structures, how they interpret these impediments, and how they attempt to navigate them.

The experience of women suggests that implicit behaviors and even explicit policies is where structural barriers, though often invisible, are still present. Within governmental and organizational policies, persistent gender discrimination, specifically second-generation gender bias, linger and affect women’s experience in the work place, which seeps into and is reinforced through culture (addressed below). National campaigns address gender discrimination and bias through efforts to increase awareness and educate women and men alike (American Council on Education, 2012, 2016a; “Barriers and Bias,” 2016). Broadening awareness about persistent discrimination will likely help decrease unintentional gender discrimination and encourage organizational renovation. Although women are and must continue to be a part of this system-wide structural reparation, I am interested in if and how each participant is experiencing the implicit structural barriers within her particular structural context.

This study focuses on how structural elements affect the *individual expectations and experiences* of each woman. Policies and procedures linger from bygone days when females were not a part (or a central part) of the functioning of colleges and universities. Thus, because the life course of American women has changed significantly in the last century, one way women experience structural barriers are as results of their personal and professional life choices and the outdated policies within organizations.

Pathways into and through adulthood among cohorts born in the first half of the past century were characterized by increasing uniformity. This was particularly the case in the period shortly after World War II, when there was little variation in the timing and sequencing of family transitions. The majority of young adults in the 1950s left the parental home to marry, followed by childbirth before age 30. (Kleinepier & de Valk, 2016, p. 675)

This pathway is called the *standard* biography, but new behaviors have emerged creating a *choice* biography instead (Beck & Beck-Gernsheim, 2002). As individuals construct their own life course, they may choose cohabitation before marriage, unmarried parenthood, or to remain childless (Bras, Liefbroer, & Elzinga, 2010). These personal choices affect the career path of women and result in a biography called the “de-standardization of the life course” (Kleinepier & de Valk, 2016). Additionally, as more women attain higher academic degrees than previous generations of women, studies show that women are delaying marriage and family (Jinyoung Hwang & Jong Ha Lee, 2014; Kangas, 2011; Kleinepier & de Valk, 2016). This change in timeline may be correlated with the decline in fertility rates in America (Jinyoung Hwang & Jong Ha Lee, 2014).

Women’s divergence from the standard path has caused them to encounter more types of structural barriers in the work force. One way that women can talk about the intersection of their choice of life course and their experience of structural barriers is through the concept of sequencing. Coined by Arlene Cardozo in the late 1980s,

sequencing is a way to discuss life course and a strategy for balancing work and family life by ordering the timing of each. Some women feel unable to do the quality of work they expect of themselves while having the family life they desire. Women across generations struggle with work-life balance—particularly because women in the work force is still a relatively new phenomenon (Bagilhole & White, 2013).

The issues of work-life balance also overlap with cultural expectations and pressures. Women struggle against the cultural notion of the *ideal worker* (Wilk, 2016; Williams, 2000). Although outdated, the ideal worker model continues to be the default standard for good work. The pressure for time and performance that women working in higher education experience often exceeds that of the *ideal worker* norm due to the tendency of the academy to be a *greedy institution* (Ward & Wolf-Wendel, 2012). However, a woman academic leader with children works for two greedy institutions. The commitment required for university administrators is all-encompassing, and the full attention demanded by children, particularly young children, is constant. The double dose of high commitments cause women to be less likely than men to seek additional administrative responsibility or senior leadership roles (Ward & Wolf-Wendel, 2012). Not wanting to sacrifice in either role, some women “sequence” their life in a way to avoid the conflict between the two spheres and to navigate around structural barriers. However, not all organizational structures allow for this kind of navigation and can block professional success for women. Countering the feminist “have-it-all” argument, Cardozo advocated for “having it all but not all at once” (Cardozo, 1989). However, there is not one prescribed sequence for women. Rather, sequencing can be achieved by strategically prioritizing one sphere over the other at different intervals.

Using the concept of *sequencing*, Kangas (2011) examined the influence of fertility timing on labor force participation. Women who delayed childbearing were more likely to scale back or step out of the workforce and enter a “family-focused phase” because they perceived they had already accomplished a lot in their career (Kangas, 2011, p. 5). However, Kangas found that women who had children earlier still felt a need to accomplish more in their careers, and they became more active in the labor force as they (and their children) aged (2011). Another study discovered six trajectories based on the timing and the sequencing of work and family life events: “unconstrained workers, initially unconstrained workers, partner-constrained workers, family-constrained workers, initially unconstrained part-time workers, and family-constrained workers with mixed work-family strategies” (Koelet et al., 2015, p. 681). Although the path of young women has shifted and extended, the influence on the family and career path are still being explored. Because the life course of women has become less standardized, I am interested to discover what patterns may emerge between women’s career stage and choice of life course. And, discussion of sequence may even reveal insight into elements of culture or nurture. This study will examine the life course (past, current, and projected) of women leaders to explore the interaction of personal life choices with structural constraints within higher education.

Culture

For the purposes of this study, culture is defined as “a system of shared meaning” (Smircich, 1983, p. 348). This shared meaning includes implicit assumptions as much as explicit assumptions. Cultural anthropology looks at culture as an element of a social organization and delineates three primary parts of culture: “first, that culture is

transmitted, it constitutes a heritage or a social tradition; secondly, that it is *learned*, it is not a manifestation, in particular content, of man's genetic constitution; and third, that it is *shared*" (Parsons, 1951, p. 15). Geertz emphasizes that culture includes "inherited conceptions expressed in symbolic forms by means of which men (sic) communicate, perpetuate, and develop their knowledge about and attitudes toward life" (1973, p. 89). I hope to reveal how women's experiences are shaped by this understanding of culture and how (or if) their behavior is affected. Talcott Parsons, a primary contributor to the ideas of structural functionalism, sought to understand the function of each aspect of culture in supporting the structure of society (1951). For the purpose of establishing the concept of cultural norms, I have adopted the structural functionalist perspective. By establishing what is expected of a woman by society, I can look at what a woman experiences when she deviates from her expected function or role in society. The concept of culture includes the "manifestations of human consciousness...in terms of their expressive, ideational, and symbolic aspects" (Smircich, 1983, p. 347). As a result, implicit gender roles and socialization are important elements included in the discussion of culture.

Particularly revealed in the ideas of the "second shift" and the "incomplete revolution," it is evident that gender roles are in transition (American Council on Education, 2016a; Esping-Andersen, 2009; Hochschild, 1989). Thus, the theory of positive deviance provides an apt lens to evaluate the perception of women's behavior within higher education culture. Positive deviance provides both an explanation and a way for societal perspectives to change (Cuff & Payne, 1984). As the literature suggests, cultural change related to women's roles is already underway (American Council on Education, 2016a; Esping-Andersen, 2009). Through the lens of positive deviance,

attention can be given to the increased access of women and to women who deviated from the cultural norms to enter the work force, rise to leadership, and balance work and family commitments (Fortune, 2017; Jones, 2012; Moe & Shandy, 2010; Ward & Wolf-Wendel, 2012). However, what remains to be understood is how the lens of deviance sheds light on the experiences of women leaders in higher education. Deviance will be used to distinguish between what women experienced as acceptable and unacceptable behavior. In this study, I seek to discover if and how cultural expectations affected their personal expectations and experiences of their compliance or deviance.

Individuals and culture function in order to support the structure of society, according to structural functionalists, (Cuff & Payne, 1984; Merton, 1957; Parsons, 1951). My interest in each participant's ability to enact change within her institutional structure is difficult to isolate from her ability to enact change within her institutional culture. In an effort to differentiate between the two strands, the structural dimension will use sequencing theory to concretely view the choices a woman makes within the context of her institution, and the cultural dimension will use positive deviance to understand a woman's experience within her institutional culture. Both will be influenced by the variety of factors related to institutional type, which is why I have chosen four different institutional archetypes to account for variances of structure and culture.

Nurture

The term "nurture" is often associated with the age-old debate in psychology about nature versus nurture. Over time psychologists have moved from a firm biological explanation orientation to "embracing a more complex and integrative perspective"

(Pitchforth, Jeffrey, & Knestel, 2013, p. 185). In an earlier era, infirmities as well as personal attributes were credited to fortune at birth or natural causes. The shift toward nurture as having a role beyond nature suggests that an indeterminable number of factors affect the development of the individual (Pitchforth et al., 2013). The purposes of this study include parsing out the elements that influence and affect the ability of women to lead in academia.

The nurture of women leaders begins at birth through modeled behavior and guidance of parents, teachers, friends, and mentors. Partly a function of culture, nurture affects how a woman anticipates her future and how she experiences her present. In professional culture, nurture can affect a woman's engagement in leadership in higher education (Friday, 2014; Hewlett et al., 2010; Ibarra et al., 2010). An institution may have formal or informal ways of nurturing employees. A culture may encourage modeling and mentorship, or independence may be a higher value. The existence of leadership development programs or networking opportunities ensures neither transformative interactions nor long-standing relationships. Rather, the literature suggests that women need sponsors (Friday, 2014; Hewlett, 2013; Hewlett et al., 2010; Ibarra et al., 2010).

Although sponsorship has been explained thoroughly in previous chapters, the value of sponsorship to my conceptual framework rests in the potential power it offers for women to enact positive change. Women who are sponsored are given practical and technical advice that helps them advance professionally (Ibarra et al., 2010; Mullen, 1998). I have chosen sponsorship as a standard for gauging the type, quality, and quantity of nurture for my participants. However, I am in no way claiming that

sponsorship represents the whole of nurture, but rather, sponsorship represents one important aspect of the development of leadership expectations and desires. Through my interviews with women, I determined the role of nurture, defined primarily through sponsorship, in developing their expectations and experiences of leadership in higher education.

Models of Convergence

Although certain elements describe and define structure, culture, and nurture, the three categories inevitably overlap. Certain issues are non-exclusive and must be discussed in terms of two or even all three of the strands. I placed the individual in the center of the model (in the area where all three strands overlap) because the literature suggests that the individual is constrained or enabled by particular aspects of structure, culture, and nurture in a given context (American Council on Education, 2012, 2016a; “Barriers and Bias,” 2016; Carli & Eagly, 2016). Each person’s experience is a confluence of these three categories—resulting from both empowering and limiting factors. My study explores what factors seem to manifest in the experiences of the participants across these three domains. Clearly the three circles cannot become one—there are structural issues that are not nurturing or may be countercultural by necessity. Even so, the literature encourages nurturing relationships be built into the structure of an organization or that the culture of a group can be more nurturing (Friday, 2014; Hewlett, 2013; Hewlett et al., 2010; Ibarra et al., 2010). Similarly, some researchers suggest updating policies and protocols to match cultural trends (American Council on Education, 2012, 2016a; “Barriers and Bias,” 2016). And, even with some cultural shifts, a new

societal equilibrium has not been found (Esping-Andersen, 2009). Thus, Figure 3.1 shows the relationships of the three strands to each other and to the individual.

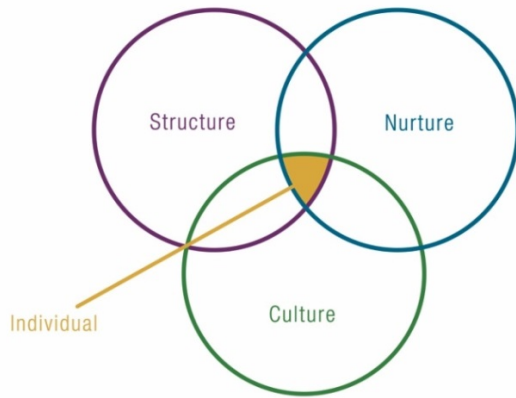


Figure 3.1. The confluence of structure, culture, and nurture.



Figure 3.2. The levels of structure, culture, and nurture.

Although Figure 3.1 illustrates the interconnectedness and overlap of the three strands, it fails to capture the magnitude of each strand. In Figure 3.2 the circles are stacked to illustrate the scale of each category. Culture is shown to be all-encompassing—suggesting that structure and nurture are subsets of culture. In other words, the elements of each category get increasingly more personal as you move from the outside to the inside of the circle in Figure 3.2. Cultural issues are formed in the broader society and affect citizens of a particular region, a country, or humankind as a whole. Issues pertaining to the structure are specific to a local organization, but they are affected by the broader cultural issues. Elements of nurture are typically more personal and specific to the individual, yet structure and culture influence the need for and approach to nurture. In this model, the individual is at the center at the thickest layer—where the three issues compound. Though the model represents the scale of the strands, this should not be interpreted to mean that there are more cultural issues and less nurture

issues. Figure 3.2 also illustrates that culture encompasses issues of structure and nurture; culture and structure pervade issues of nurture; all three strands permeate the meaning-making of the individual. As Figure 3.1 and Figure 3.2 illustrate, the issues are shaped (at varying degrees) by the other categories. An understanding of these illustrations combined with the knowledge of each individual strand offers a robust understanding of the guiding categories that undergird this study.

Methods

My ontological views about *the nature of reality* and my epistemological views about *who can be a knower* affect the conceptualization of this research study (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2010). Because my view of reality expects the construction of the social world through relationships and interactions, I seek to understand how meaning is socially constructed, how people make sense of their lives, and how they see their worlds (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). In order to examine the lived experiences of women in leadership in higher education, I chose a qualitative approach. A qualitative study allows the researcher to evaluate the meaning that participants attach to their experiences, and it gives a lens to view the way others perceive their experiences (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015).

[Qualitative research] is an effort to understand situations in their uniqueness as part of a particular context and the interactions there. This understanding is an end in itself, so that it is not attempting to predict what may happen in the future necessarily, but to understand the nature of that setting—what it means for participants to be in that setting, what their lives are like, what’s going on for them, what their meanings are, what the world looks like in that particular setting—and in the analysis to be able to communicate that faithfully to others who are interested in that setting.... The analysis strives for depth of understanding. (Patton, 1985, p. 1)

Qualitative research allows the researcher to focus on the in-depth experiences of a purposeful sample of information-rich individuals. With an interest in the expectations

and experiences of women academic leaders, my ontology and epistemology align with the tenets of qualitative research. The meaning I seek is the meaning-making of women leaders in higher education. After all, “qualitative researchers are after meaning” (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2010, p. 4).

A focus on meaning-making aligns with the interpretive perspective, which assumes “social reality can be understood via the perspectives of social actors enmeshed in meaning-making activities” (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2010, p. 5). The interpretive approach emphasizes relaying the stories of the women participating in the study (Creswell, 1998). Approached from an interpretivist perspective, this phenomenological study will evaluate how structure, culture, and nurture combine to influence women’s experiences in academic leadership. Patton (2002) describes that the phenomenological perspective focuses on “what people experience and how they interpret the world” (p. 106). Creswell (1998) explains that a phenomenological study “describes the meaning of the lived experiences of several individuals about a concept or phenomenon” (p. 51). I do not believe that there is only one reality for women leaders in academia; rather, I believe experiences are wide-ranging in higher education leadership.

The primary sources of data are 41 in-depth interviews combined with analysis of a completed demographic questionnaire (Appendix D) and current curriculum vitae for the women academic leaders in the sample. In this study I sought to gain an understanding of the lived experiences of the women leader participants through research that is “richly descriptive” (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015, p. 20). Through the interview process, participants shared their stories and offered others an opportunity to better understand their journeys.

Setting, Participants, and Permission

In this study, leadership refers to administrative positions at a college or university. The characteristics of the population of interest are women on the senior administrative path in higher education. The senior administrative path is defined as including what Wheat (2012) called “key-line administrative positions,” or “senior-level administrative positions that are most commonly held by an individual in succession to a college or university presidential appointment” (Wheat, 2012, p. 48). The most common positions on the senior administrative path are academic deans, chief academic officers (CAO), provosts, or vice presidents (Wheat, 2012). For this study, women from any of these positions were included.

I located individuals who matched those characteristics and scheduled interviews with informed consent from all participants. Because access to these individuals is limited, I used a combination of purposeful and opportunistic sampling—selecting useful cases as the opportunity arose. Patton describes purposeful sampling as “selecting participants because they are information rich and illuminative; that is, they offer useful manifestations of the phenomenon of interest; sampling, then, is aimed at insight about the phenomenon, not empirical generalization from a sample to a population” (2002, p. 40). The power and value of purposeful sampling comes from the focus on in-depth understanding (Patton, 2002). I used a stratified, purposeful sample of 41 women college leaders representing four different institutional archetypes as shown in Table 3.2. Participants self-identified their race and age. Pseudonyms were used to protect the identity of participants.

Table 3.2

Participant information by institutional type

Number	Participant	Position Level	Institution Type	Age Range	Race	First
1.	Gloria	Dean	collegial	51-60	black	
2.	Sydney	Provost	collegial	41-50	white	
3.	Trinity	Provost	collegial	71-80	white	
4.	Ann	Vice President	collegial	61-70	white	*
5.	Michelle	Vice President	collegial	41-50	white	*
6.	Nikki	Vice President	collegial	61-70	white	
7.	Rebecca	Vice President	collegial	61-70	black	*
8.	Adrienne	President	collegial	61-70	white	*
9.	Julia	President	collegial	61-70	white	*
10.	Margaret	President	collegial	51-60	white	*
11.	Mary	President	collegial	61-70	white	*
12.	Pamela	President	collegial	71-80	white	*
13.	Sharon	President	collegial	61-70	white	*
14.	Kennedy	Dean	bureaucratic	51-60	white	
15.	Lola	Dean	bureaucratic	51-60	white	
16.	Destiny	Provost	bureaucratic	61-70	white	
17.	Faith	Provost	bureaucratic	61-70	white	*
18.	Diana	Vice President	bureaucratic	51-60	white	*
19.	Jasmine	Vice President	bureaucratic	51-60	white	*
20.	Kiara	Vice President	bureaucratic	31-40	black	
21.	Madison	Vice President	bureaucratic	51-60	white	*
22.	Anna	President	bureaucratic	61-70	white	*
23.	Betty	President	bureaucratic	51-60	white	*
24.	Beverly	President	bureaucratic	61-70	black	
25.	Gail	President	bureaucratic	61-70	white	*
26.	Emily	Dean	political	41-50	white	*
27.	Joyce	Dean	political	51-60	white	*
28.	Karen	Dean	political	41-50	white	*
29.	Kelly	Dean	political	61-70	black	
30.	Nancy	Dean	political	61-70	white	*
31.	Debra	Asst. Provost	political	41-50	white	*
32.	Alexis	President	political	51-60	white	*
33.	Cynthia	President	political	51-60	white	
34.	Lydia	President	political	61-70	white	
35.	Cathy	Dean	anarchical	51-60	white	*
36.	Donna	Dean	anarchical	61-70	white	*
37.	Melissa	Dean	anarchical	41-50	white	
38.	Tina	Dean	anarchical	61-70	white	
39.	Carolyn	Vice President	anarchical	61-70	white	
40.	Kayla	Vice President	anarchical	61-70	Jewish	
41.	Kimberly	Vice President	anarchical	41-50	white	

Using a stratified purposive sample ensured that the particular characteristics of each level from academic dean to president were represented (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2010). Additionally, the four institutional archetypes represent the culture specific to their archetype. Although this qualitative study did not attempt to control for the wide-ranging institutional cultures, the use of four archetypes was helpful to separate institutions based on certain common cultural features. On average, there were ten participants from each type of institution. Also, within each institutional archetype, I sought representation from every level of administration included in my definition: deans, provosts, vice presidents, and presidents.

The use of four archetypes guided my purposeful sampling and aided in the inclusion of participants from a variety of institutional types. Many scholars in the field of organizational theory in higher education promote the theoretical and practical utility offered by complex, multi-frame models in the study of institutions (Bergquist, 1992; Birnbaum, 1988; Bolman & Deal, 2013; Bolman & Gallos, 2010). The institutions included in this study were chosen based on my desire to have a variety of institutional types and cultural environments (see Appendix C for the rubric used to classify institutions). The four archetypes include collegial, bureaucratic, political, and anarchical areas (from Birnbaum (1988), *How College Works*).

The collegial institution (usually with a small student population) emphasizes collaboration, equal participation, concern for human resources, and the practice of consensus to establish goals and make decisions. Focused primarily on residential, undergraduate education, collegial institutions pursue professors who are teaching-focused and willing to advise students. The bureaucratic institution (typically medium in

size) stresses logical decision making through a formal structure that relies on rules, regulations, hierarchy, and goals (Birnbaum, 1988). Offering both certifications and undergraduate degrees, bureaucratic institutions attract commuter, part-time, and nontraditional students. In a characteristically large, political institution, organizational structure forms around competition for resources and the varied interests of individuals and groups within the institution. Political institutions are more likely to emphasize research—evidenced by graduate degree programs and the expectations on the faculty. The anarchical institution, usually with an extra-large student body, focuses on the role of symbols (stories, traditions, rituals) in creating meaning for those within the institution. Ethnically, religiously, and politically diverse, anarchical institutions offer the widest range of degrees from undergraduate, graduate, and professional studies.

Through the study of Birnbaum's (1991) institutional types, prior studies have found the importance of organizational structure—even patterns of organizational structure (Langford, 2010; Wheat, 2012). Berger calls for more attention to “patterns of organizational structure” and calls campus leaders to “pay attention to and monitor the nature of organizational structure on their campuses” (Berger, 2002, p. 57). Berger's study was particularly concerned with the experience of students. However, his conclusions imply that organizational structure affects the culture at the institution and thus affects how those in the institution are nurtured. Birnbaum's four archetypes will illuminate the influences that the institutional type has on the experience of the woman leader.

Solicitation. To gain access for interviewing, each participant was contacted through an emailed letter of invitation (Appendix A) that explained the purpose of the research, the significance of the study, and the role of the participants. The email informed the participant of the process by which the researcher would contact each individual to confirm participation and to schedule a time for an interview. A few participants preferred to schedule a time for the interview over the phone. Also, a curriculum vita was requested and obtained from each participant to better understand her career pathway. I obtained consent prior to conducting interviews using an informed consent form (Appendix B) that described the process for protecting the confidentiality of the participant, the use of digital recording, and the potential risks of participation. Confidentiality was pursued by using pseudonyms, generalizing descriptions of institutions, and by storing the curriculum vitae and interview transcripts on a password-protected computer file. Interviews were scheduled and conducted at the convenience of the participant.

Data collection. The primary data source was one-on-one interviews with four groups of participants. I interviewed 41 participants across four institutional archetypes. Interviews lasted between 45 and 75 minutes. When possible, the interviews were performed face-to-face, including video calls through Skype and Zoom. However, the majority of the interviews were performed over the telephone. I thought phone interviews may negatively affect the quality of the study, but in retrospect, I believe this was actually the most effective way to interview this population, particularly due to my status as a graduate student. Phone interviews allowed for a confessional booth experience. In my phone interviews, participants seemed to speak more freely about their

experiences. Although difficult to measure, I had the sense that women in face-to-face interviews were more guarded or strived to be politically correct. The interviews were guided by an Interview Protocol (Appendix C) that I developed with the approval of my committee. The women interviewed from each of the four institutional archetypes were selected in order to equally represent all four archetypes. All of the interviews were recorded and transcribed with the help of a hired transcriptionist.

Data analysis. Using my conceptual framework, I analyzed the data through the three strands of structure, culture, and nurture. I used a two-phase coding schema (Saldaña, 2015). As the interviews were completed, they were then transcribed, and I began the first round of coding. For the first round, I used provisional coding in which I generated an initial list of codes based on my research prior to collecting data, with additional codes added as the data dictated (Saldaña, 2015). Provisional coding “can be revised, modified, deleted, or expanded to include new codes” (Saldaña, 2015, p. 266) I used the primary codes of structure, culture, nurture, as well as an overarching category, and I placed subgroups under each category. Once all of the interviews were completed, I coded a second time to reorganize and reevaluate the data. For the second round, I used pattern coding to organize the first round of codes into categories. Pattern coding is helpful for second cycle coding in “examining social networks and patterns of human relationships” (Saldaña, 2015, p. 266). Through data analysis, relationships among the codes and the strength of influence for certain categories over others ultimately helped reveal deepened understanding. New codes emerged through the coding process, and I included those that fit within the three strands as well as outliers that did not fit my preconceptions.

I used Nvivo 11 ethnographic software to help organize and securely store the complex research data, as well as to aid in data analysis and coding. Qualitative research work has been transformed through the use of computer-assisted software (Fielding & Lee, 1998). Nvivo 11 software also housed my notes and memos in one central (and password-protected) location.

Data verification. The social and contextual nature of qualitative research does not support traditional standards of reliability and validity (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). In order to maintain high standards and perform quality research, I adhered to the guidelines of trustworthiness and authenticity recommended for qualitative research (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). The four dimensions for verification include credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Each of these four are pursued through various means associated with them. First, credibility ensures that the participants and their meaning-making are accurately conveyed (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The information I collected through extensive notes, audio records, and transcriptions aided in credibility. Also, I employed member checking for my participants to review their interview transcript. Second, transferability is the burden to demonstrate applicability of findings to other contexts (Marshall & Rossman, 1999). Although Lincoln and Guba (1985) mention that this burden rests more on future researchers, I took steps to enhance the transferability of my study. My transparency in the process, the availability of my interview protocols, codes, and analysis, as well as my use of thick description allow for maximum transferability. Third, dependability in research shows that the findings are consistent and could be repeated (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). I worked with an external

faculty member (not involved in the research process) to help examine the process and product of this study. This inquiry audit helped the researcher evaluate whether or not the findings, analyses, and conclusions align with the collected data and account for the changing social world. Fourth, confirmability is related to the traditional notion of objectivity (Marshall & Rossman, 1999). I had multiple sources of information (triangulation) through the collection of curriculum vitae and personal interviews allowing the study to have confirmability. I took an approach of intentionally recording research decisions and my reasoning for them at every step of the research process to allow for reflexivity (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Ethical considerations. An additional part of trustworthiness is the ethical treatment of participants. I was honest with my participants and my committee about the intentions of my research. Not only did I not intentionally harm or deceive my participants, but I also took steps to protect them throughout this process. First, I submitted a proposal to my dissertation committee. I also received approval for this proposal from Baylor University's Institutional Review Board. An informed consent form describing the confidential nature of the research was required for all participants to review. The form also explained to participants that they were free to opt out of the study at any point and that their identities were anonymous. At the completion of the study, I will destroy all documents linking these participants to the study.

The processes of collecting data, handling data, and analyzing data has been performed ethically. The data will be saved and password-protected in Nvivo 11 on a secure institutional computer. The identities of participants were kept confidential and pseudonyms replaced their names. When data did not align or support my beliefs in this

study, I did not hide or destroy it. Special precautions were taken to keep the data well organized for honest review. Finally, the results of the study were reviewed by my colleagues and my committee to ensure ethical behavior.

CHAPTER FOUR

Findings: Structure

How does the sequencing of work and family influence women's expectations and experiences of leadership in higher education?

Structure is the focus of many studies on women in leadership—with an eye toward policy and systems. However, in this study I used the concept of *sequencing* to understand if and how women ordered work and family in their lives and to evaluate how their chosen order affected their experiences of leadership in higher education. Based on the careful examination of the professional journey of women in this study, the following discussion of structure will include the sequence of work and family, the role of the spouse, the path into administration, and the obstacles along the way.

Sequencing Work and Family

Sequencing is a way to discuss life course and an approach for navigating work and family life by intentionally ordering each one. Although most women did not formally plan their careers and then stick to the plan, the ordering of their lives tells more about their sequencing than any life plan could. Even so, several women warned, as Gloria, a dean, did: “Don’t presume that I have been strategic. I just have not been that strategic.” Or, like Mary, a college president, said, “The next step was taken because the doors were shut. Or, I knew the doors would never be fully open in the existing moment, so I would always go to the next horizon and see what was on that plane.” Nevertheless, their stories exposed their sequencing. Although most women were married with

children, some did not have children, some were divorced, some remarried, and a few never married.

Because three-quarters of participants had children, the overlay of family on career was a relevant piece to their experiences of leadership in higher education. The myriad of pathways of women in this study shows that no route is an easy one. No matter when women had children there were challenging aspects of their journey into administrative leadership. As Lydia, a college president, cleverly said, “I wouldn’t call it ‘balancing,’ it was just trying to hold on.” I will discuss the findings by addressing the following: (1) Women had different strategies on *sequencing children* in conjunction with their career. (2) Once they were *raising children*, participants described creative childcare and work schedules to meet both family and professional demands. (3) Some women had *no children* (or spouses) to consider.

Sequencing Children

A little less than half of participants with children had them earlier in their marriage before or during graduate school. Sharon, a college president, had children in graduate school before she pursued her career. “When the children were young, it was my choice to stay home full time ... because I just wanted to. [My husband] didn’t ask me to ... but that was my choice.” Sharon, as well as a handful of other participants, was clear that she was grateful she had sequenced children before her career. Tina, a dean, shared her story about the impact of having kids before starting her career.

I do think children do sidetrack you, and that’s not a bad thing. I mean, I can’t imagine not having my children or grandchild, but it is something that happens. It probably helped me, because I wasn’t having to stop my career path to have them. Whereas other people must take time off: you’re trying to get your career going, and you must stop and then ... you’re dealing with a baby. It really can take some

time, and of course, you want to spend the time with them. It's really a challenge, whereas when I started back [to work], my youngest child was six, I think. She was school age.

...Not that I'm advocating having kids like I did, because I had them really young, but there are some advantages to it, honestly.

Sharon's and Tina's stories represent the women who had children first in order to have their careers later. Eight of the thirteen women who sequenced their life in this way were over age 60.

Seven participants used the flexible schedule of graduate school as child-bearing years. Gloria laughed as she shared her experience in graduate school, "My first son, the joke is he went to college before he went to kindergarten. I used to carry him to school ... I carried him to school in a carrier and he sat in class." Although a graduate school schedule was variable, Cathy said her doctorate took five years because "writing my dissertation, being pregnant, and having a five-year old was a bit much to manage." Some women who had children earlier felt that their obligation to their children and family accounted for their delayed advancement. For Lydia, children were "why I kind of have a later start to my administrative career."

Several women described themselves as "a bit older" in their mid-30's when they had children. Married thirteen years before having children, Alexis, a college president, explained, "Partly because, 'Oh, well I'd better get my PhD before we have kids.' Then it's like, 'Oh, I'd better get tenure before we have kids.'" The prioritizing of career (including education) before beginning to have children was a common sequence among participants. Alexis said, "You just keep thinking of all these reasons that you need to put off having a child and so finally we got around to it." Many women wanted to get established in their careers before bearing children. Wanting to finish law school first,

Ann, who had previously been a vice president, explained her delay. “I had really contributed substantially to that law practice, in terms of hours. I’d work Saturdays, I’d work evenings. ‘Cause we were just single, I mean, my husband and I, we didn’t have any children, so we could invest a lot of time [in work].”

In summary, women who waited to have children were hoping to accomplish other goals first. “We wanted to make sure we could afford them. ... Being young in our careers, we wanted to experience married life with us.” Kiara, a vice president, thoroughly explained her and her husband’s postponement of children, “We wanted the opportunity to experience careers and whatever they would bring: good, bad, or otherwise. We waited to make sure that we were in a position to be able to give 100% to our family, or starting a family.” Kiara is a comparably young vice president whose experience represents that of a younger generation. Donna, an older dean, reflected on how things have changed over the years for women with children.

I think people did not know how to necessarily appreciate individuals who were trying to balance work and family in the way many women were doing at that time. I mean, most of the men who were faculty members who were married, had somebody at home to take care of the family. So, I didn’t have children until after I was tenured, but even then, who’s taking care of the children? Who’s taking them to doctors’ appointments? All those kinds of things were still falling a lot on women in a disproportionate way. I don’t think I was the only one. That’s changed a lot. So, I think people are much more respectful and conscious, these days, about the need to balance home and work in a way, whether you’re a man or a woman. ... Once I had children, it certainly impacted my time in track as an associate professor. Trying to juggle all the things one juggles. It was just taking me a little bit longer to get everything done.

Children changed the way women did work. Whether women had children early in their 20s or later in their 30s, the entrance of children added responsibilities and relationships that had to be navigated. Donna touched on the challenges women face in raising children, which will be explored in detail in the next section.

Raising Children

Women, as well as their husbands, worked out creative schedules to maximize time with their children. Ann talked about working three-quarter time while her husband worked evenings so they could hand-off the children and not have childcare for their young children. Several women mentioned working odd hours—either early in the morning or late into the night—while children slept. Other women taught night classes while their husbands worked in the day, or for husband and wife professors, they worked to alternate their class schedules so one parent was always available for the children.

Many women touted the flexibility of the professoriate and the benefits for motherhood. In Diana's experience as a faculty member before becoming a vice president, she found work/life balance to be achievable. "I think it's incredibly easy to have kids when you're faculty. I mean, the reality is that it's a great lifestyle for women who are trying to sort of have it all." Similarly, Destiny, a provost, shared about how academia gave her flexibility in her schedule: "When my kids were little, it was a great balance. ... If you can't be a full-time faculty member at a community college and balance a family, I don't know where you're going to be able to do it." However, many women expressed that working in administration is very different—much less feasible with small children. Diana advised, "If you're going to try to rise to senior leadership in higher ed, you have to either not have children or your children need to be older, or you need to have a willing partner who is willing to be the lead parent." Diana's comments return to the idea of sequencing and intentional ordering of major life events.

Even so, some women were managing administration with young children. Currently, in a vice president role, Kiara shared her struggles "with being 100% mom

with being 100% employee, being 100% wife, being an active community citizen, and trying to balance it all.” Kiara said, “I’ve got to be at work, I’ve got to make sure my child is at daycare. I’ve got to make sure she’s picked up on time, because my husband works out of town.” Kiara shared that the struggle extends to all areas of domestic responsibility as a parent of a young child.

I’m the grocery shopper in the family. So, that means when I’m out at our local grocery store, trying to buy groceries, here come people wanting to talk about issues. I’m not [Vice President Jones] right now, I’m Kiara running into Wal-Mart to get what I need, trying to get out so I can get home. I don’t think men have to deal with that. They don’t have to worry about what time dinner will be done and helping the kids with homework. They do that, but they are not the primary responsible person for that.

Madison was also a vice president who had young children as an administrator—in fact, she had three children under age four when she first moved into administration. “We were tired a lot there,” Madison shared with a laugh. She explained, “I think the key is the kids ages, and their needs at different times. I mean, when you’re a parent, when you make that commitment to have children, it’s not something you just kind of do part time. I mean, it’s a full-time thing.” Like most other women, Madison shared that “in many ways it was harder when they were young, because it was getting up in the middle of the night with them to feed them, or when they were sick or whatever. It’s just different the older that they get.” Interestingly, Madison mentioned that her institution had no maternity leave at that time.

No Children

Nearly a quarter of participants did not have children. Aside from the single women who did not have children for understandable reasons, married women did not have children for various reasons, including health, timing and age. From the perspective

of her personal faith, Julia, a college president, explained her not having had children as “God’s plan” for her and her husband. “He knew what he had for us and knew that was what would be best for us,” Julia said. A few women mentioned that “it just happened” over time, but for several women, working in higher education provided a good substitute—college students. “In some odd way, my academic experience was a blessing, because it sort of filled a gap that I didn’t even know I had, and didn’t know I would have, until later in my life,” Jasmine, a vice president, said. Higher education gave her personal interactions with students. “I was raising other people’s children. I was very involved with them. It was just funny, it all kind of worked. I didn’t feel like I was missing anything.”

Not having children was not easy for all participants. Sydney and her husband had tried to have children without a successful pregnancy, but at some point, they decided together not to have children.

I remember sort of being to that point where it just did not seem to be something that was going to happen for us. I will tell you, on that point, I did go through about a six-month period of grief around that, and spiritual direction, just sort of letting go of that, as something that would be part of my life and our life together. ... Yeah, we do not have children. There are some great things about that and some really awful things about it. We’ve kind of ... defined our life in that regard.

Though her decision was unintentional in some ways, Sydney, who was a provost, recognized that not having children may have positively affected her work life. A few women decided intentionally not to have children for the sake of their career. Beverly said, “When you look at my trajectory and the different places that we’ve lived, if I had had children, it would have been different. I wouldn’t have been able to make those decisions.” Now in her second college presidency, Beverly explained a sense of mobility in her work since she did not have children. Early in her marriage, Anna and her husband

decided they did not want children. Anna, a college president, said, “The freedom it’s given me, when other people have to balance their children and their work, their family, that hasn’t really been a problem for me. Not having children makes a big difference on what you can do professionally.” Women who did not have children ranged in administrative position from dean to president—six of the ten women were college presidents, two were vice presidents, and two were deans. All of the women who did not have children in this study were over age 50, so they had passed typical childbearing years.

Navigating Work and Family Life

Work and family are both greedy institutions. Women talked in depth about trying to navigate the needs of both. Lydia shared that work and family were never perfectly balanced for her, “Sometimes it was much more work focus and sometimes ... more family focused. But you try to maintain your progress in all of those things to do as good a job as you can at being a parent, being a spouse, and being an employee.” Participants shared various strategies they used as they navigated the tension between work and family and the challenges that arose.

Women navigated the extra events required in administration by bringing their children along whenever they could—football games, concerts, picnics, and other campus activities. Margaret, a college president, shared, “I made it clear...that if we’re going to be spending—you know, a football game lasts forever—four hours on a Saturday, then I want [my kids] to be there.” For some women, like Melissa, they have “intentionally been that visible” believing that they are serving as a role model for other women. “I wanted every other faculty member to see that ... you can’t have it all, but you can

balance it.” As the only female in her department when she had children, Melissa, a dean, said, “I didn’t have that person or those people to serve as a role model for me. ... I think when I started being very visible with my family that, as I tell people, you get the whole package, because I’m not anything without them.” In a comparable way, Gail, a college president, believed that being able to bring your children to things is “one of the wonderful things about higher ed.” By allowing children to be part of the academic family and involved in the campus community, Gail thought, “It really adds another dimension to a person, you know? It really softens a person, the men and the women both, when they bring their kids to activities and so on.” Several women expressed that they liked to include their family in work events when possible.

However, some women chose to keep their family separate from their work. Michelle had some challenging situations at home, but she chose to keep those private. “I’m sure it affected things, but I sort of had to pretend it didn’t. I had to say I was fine, when in fact I wasn’t fine. ... I wanted someone to think about me as the employee or the professor.” Although other women clearly expressed this compartmentalization, a few women indirectly signaled this separation of work and family by being less open to talk about their home life in the interview.

Childcare ranged from primarily parents to a nanny to a daycare to trading with friends to family members pitching in. As Destiny shared, some couples were committed to watching their kids themselves, “It’s a lot of work to raise children—to me it’s important work. I wasn’t about to turn it over to someone else to raise my kids.” All around women wanted to do what was best for their children. However, women made different decisions about what “the best” was. Rebecca, a vice president, said, “I worked

insane hours and it did influence my children, which ... influenced a decision to send my daughter to boarding school when she went to high school. Because my work was impacting her quality of life.” Women had to make tough decisions in caring for their family and growing professionally.

Women were clear that children were not obstacles, but they did create challenges and slowed their progress. Joyce shared about the commitment of her partner and how they split the time caring for their children. “We still have a child at home and that child has special needs and can’t be left alone. As you can imagine, it gets complicated quickly, but it’s not so much that it’s an obstacle, it is more of something that you just embrace.” Joyce’s story is one of a series of health crises with her child, which required immense attention and naturally took priority over her work. Faith, a provost, found, “There are always tensions between meeting the needs of your students, meeting the needs of the institution, and meeting the needs of your family. ... You’re always having to make choices.” Tensions were accepted as part of life by women participants. Gloria puts the blame on American culture, “We don’t have a culture that values rearing children as a part of the economy. We don’t think that developing citizens and faithful and integrous children is important work. Culturally, we just don’t believe that. So, of course, there’s tension.”

Some mothers expressed a sense of guilt for working and being away from children. After moving into administration, Kayla, a vice president, said, “I did miss certain things to fulfill what I saw as an obligation on an administrative level. I think that is an area where women have it more difficult than men. I think because we feel guilty when miss a few things.” This “mommy guilt,” as several women referred to it, was

expressed more than a few times. Lola, a dean, reflected on the tension, “But I managed it, you know, I didn’t feel so, so guilty that I couldn’t manage it.” Margaret talked about how she managed. “One of the things I had to figure out how to do was to not miss what was going on in my children’s lives while I was also being an administrator.” Margaret found it was a matter of arranging the time. “It’s not that I let things go undone, it’s just I was able to organize around it.” Many women mentioned the strategy of organizing the time. Nancy, a dean, said, “Organizing everything so that I could get my work done and I could also be with my children ... and my husband ... Saying ‘yes’ to some things means saying ‘no’ to a lot of things. You just have to find your way.” Even though navigating work and family is challenging, the consensus among participants was that family was not an “excuse” for subpar performance at work.

Several women in this study talked about “managing” the tension between work and family to prevent feeling guilty for being a working mother. To maintain work and family harmony, women turned down promotions and opportunities, which the research suggests is common among women (Baker, 2010). Other research described this behavior as women fitting their employment around the needs of their family—due to love, conflict avoidance, gender roles, or lack of an alternative option (Baker, 2012).

Many women shared how they worked to keep pace with male colleagues. Tina explained it this way, “Women often still, today, take on the burden of caring for their children and caring for their household, but I never used that as an excuse. I was going to have high quality research ... to have the quantity of research that any man had.” Madison described herself as a “frustrated faculty member” because she had ideas that were overlooked in her department. “My husband, at some point, said, ‘You know, you

just need to be in charge, because then you can say “yes” to people or say “yes” to your own ideas, or whatever.’ So, I give him a lot of credit.” She took the plunge and moved into administration, even with young children at home, because of the support and encouragement of her husband. The tension between work and family was difficult for Madison at times.

One night the five of us were sitting down to dinner and I said, “Okay, I’m leaving for wherever tomorrow.” And my middle child, who is my mini-me, she’s my clone, personality-wise anyway, she says, “You’re leaving us again? Mommy, you’re always gone. You’re always gone.” You know, I felt the mommy guilt, right? So, I kind of looked ... My husband and I sit on opposite ends of the table, and the kids are down the side, I looked at my husband and my husband looked at our daughter and he goes, “Do you like living in this nice house we live in?” “Well, yeah.” “Do you like going to Disney?” “Well, yeah.” He went through several questions like that and he said, “The reason we can do that is because the job mom has. She doesn’t like to leave us, but she’s got to do it because this is part of her role and she’s got a very important role and we’re proud of her and we love her and we want her to be happy. She’s going to come back to us, but we have to let her go.” The kids were like, “Oh, okay.”

I told my husband later, I said, “I don’t think I’ve ever loved you more than I did right then, because I was sitting there going, what do I say to my kids?” But he saved the day by framing it in a way that they got it, without me having to feel horrible about it, right?

Although her example focused on the material benefits Madison was able to provide, the point of the story was to show the deep-rooted support her husband had for the work she did gave her strength to overcome the guilt she felt. However, not all women had supportive husbands to help them cope.

A few women were single moms during some of their career and shared about juggling the demands of parenthood and work on their own. Carolyn, a vice president, shared about her nearly two-hour one-way commute with “two little ones” at home, juggling getting them “back and forth to school on a day in and day out basis” while she was married, but after years of a long commute to work, Carolyn got tenure, which

corresponded with her divorce. As a result, she moved closer to the university and brought her children with her. “Now I traded the travel demands with 100% responsibility ... in terms of being a single parent. So, I didn’t have to go as far, but I had 24/7 responsibility.” Carolyn was one of a few women who managed home and work duties as a single parent.

In the end, women had few, if any, regrets about working while raising children. Gail said, “I was very, very intentional on giving them time. ... Each of [my children] says they felt like I put them first. To be fair, I don’t know that I always put them first, but they feel like I have, so there you go.” Several women mentioned that their own memory of being away differed from the way their children remembered their regular presence, which helped them feel content in the end. Lola expressed that pursuing her career was worth it, “When I’ve asked my daughters about those times and stuff, they don’t regret it. They really admire me. They want to be like me. So, I don’t feel guilty in that way.” However, Lola expressed that her regular travel and the associated extra work for her husband had taken a toll on their relationship. Women recognized that there were costs and benefits of their academic work for their family.

Family-Affected Decisions

An important caveat to sequencing is the way in which family ends up affecting the career decisions a woman makes. Alexis explained, “when you have a family and you’re making decisions that affect an entire family, there are probably opportunities you don’t look at that you might if you didn’t have a whole family to worry about how it was going to affect them.” For example, Alexis shared about her own situation when her and her husband decided to “just turn down opportunities” so their daughter could finish high

school. “We knew it wasn’t in her best interest, because she was doing well where she was. ... We were not going to be willing to split the family up.” She waited until her daughter was going to college and took a new job at that point. “It was a choice that we made as a family, and it was the right choice to make. ...The timing was good.” Alexis is one of about half of the participants who describe a story of waiting for the next opportunity until the timing was right for the family. Family-affected decisions occurred across all institutional types as evidenced in Figure 4.1. Interestingly, women at anarchical institutions were the only ones not to report decisions unaffected by family.

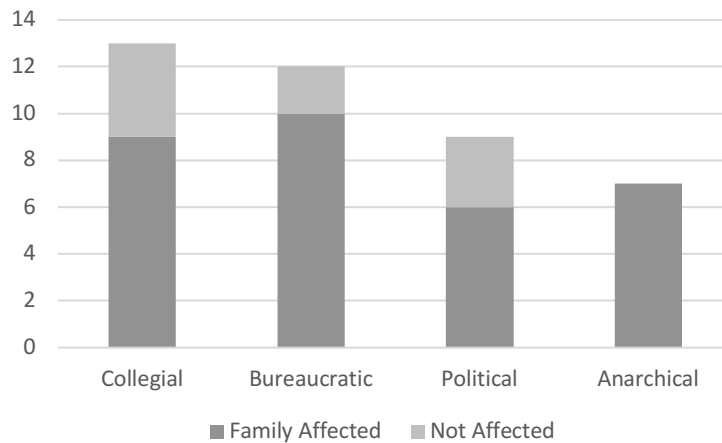


Figure 4.1. Family-affected decisions and institutional type. Number of participants out of the total that did and did not make family-affected decisions based on the institutional type.

Women described opportunities in tandem with the effects on their families.

After making a career in consulting, Cathy shared, “I ended up back in my hometown, because my mother was ill, working at the college I went to as an undergrad. Again, these are family choices, right? Not really career choices.” Cathy went on to explain:

You can’t always think that you’re going to move up in your current organization in the way that you want to. ... I think men do this better than women. They think of the opportunity, not staying in the local area. You know, a man will think

nothing of picking up and moving his children in their senior year in high school because he got a better job opportunity in another state. A woman, I think, is more likely to think, “Oh my gosh, I need to stay another year, the kids have got to get through school. What if my husband can’t get a good job in the area? Will I know anybody? Is that going to be a problem?” You know? It’s not that they can’t do the job, it’s that they don’t grab the opportunities when they come by.

Destiny exemplified this when she explained her move into administration. “The only reason that I even considered moving into this position is that my kids were grown by the time it happened. I have two [children]. So, I didn’t have the same family responsibilities that I did.” Women repeatedly explained how their professional decision was a result of their personal, specifically familial, circumstances. Diana shared, “Earlier in my career when I was trying to raise children, and my children were young, the thought of trying to move institutions was more difficult and challenging than it is now. . . . I think that’s something that was certainly a significant barrier.” Although women were typically quick to cover up any “obstacle” language when it came to their children or family infringing on their ability to advance, Diana’s honesty represented an evidenced yet rarely articulated belief. Women’s career decisions were significantly influenced by the needs of their family—both their children and their spouse.

Most times women talked about the needs of their children, but there was also mention of the work their spouse would do if they took an opportunity. In Faith’s journey, her spouse found a better paying job than her, so she turned down an offer for a tenure-track position. Instead, Faith took a job as an adjunct professor, which she says shows “that my family life was a critical factor in my professional trajectory.” At the time of the interview, Faith had become a provost. Even so, she saw her family as having influenced her career path.

Even later in their careers, women take family into consideration. After women had grown children, they expressed a desire to be geographically close to grandchildren. Rather than choosing further advancement, Tina shared why she made a lateral career move. “I have children, grandchildren ... and turned out there was a Dean’s position open [nearby them]. So, I applied for that position and I did get it.” A few participants were gearing down for retirement and chose posts closer to family. Family-affected decisions were made by over three-quarters of participants—at least at some point, if not many points, in their careers.

Interestingly, this was not dependent on if women had children. Three women without children spoke about family-affected decisions in terms of a spouse or other family member. When someone makes a decision that is influenced by the needs of and ideal timing for their family members over and above what is best for their career, their choice alters the trajectory of their career. On the face of it, this is not uniquely a female issue; however, the literature shows us that women are much more likely than men to make family-affected decisions. The American Council on Education (ACE) found in their 2017 American College President Study that women presidents were two times more likely than men to have altered their career progression for others—32 percent of women presidents stalled in their career advancement to care for a child, spouse, or parent.

Without understanding the characteristics of the participants, Figure 4.1 might seem surprising. However, the number of children becomes important for understanding family-affected decisions. Figure 4.2 elucidates that the smaller the institution the more likely women were to be single. All participants at anarchical institutions had children—

including the only participant with as many as four children. Although this is not necessarily representative of all women academic leaders at anarchical institutions, this variance might suggest that larger institutions have more comprehensive maternity leave policies or more family-friendly policies, in general. Additional research is necessary to understand how institutional culture influences women’s desire and support for having children.

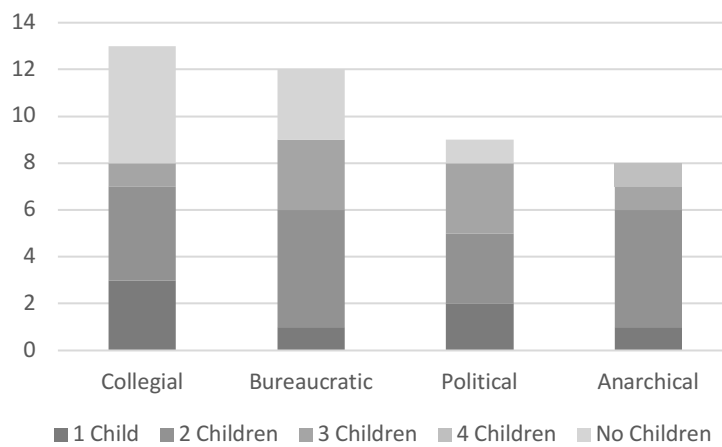


Figure 4.2. Children by institutional type. Number of participants out of the total that did and did not have children by institutional type.

Children were one reason that women made family-affected decisions, but another factor is the work and role of their spouse. Women with trailing spouses, or spouses whose career was second priority to their own job, were common among this population of senior leaders as seen in Figure 7.3. The proportion of trailing spouses to non-trailing spouses increased with the size of the institution. The correlation of trailing spouses with institution type may speak to the increasing level of responsibility of senior leaders. Spouses following the work of their wife were 89 percent at political institutions and 85 percent at anarchical institutions. The findings may also have to do with the

number of children these participants had (see Figure 7.2). The greater the number of children, the more likely one parent was needed to care for the children.

Role of the Spouse

Women talked about at least two dimensions of the role of their spouse in the context of sequencing their careers. First, women explained how their careers complemented each other—either as an equal career spouse or as a trailing spouse. Second, women discussed the level of support offered by their spouse from supportive to not supportive.

Equal Career Spouse

Few women talked about having an equal career with their husbands. Of those who did, they primarily talked in terms of deciding together when opportunities arose. Lydia said, “I think together we said we both want careers, and we both want to be good parents. So, I think we made a joint decision that worked for us, and we weren’t prioritizing one over the other.” Not only did equal career spouses work together, they also valued each other’s work. Kiara said, “I think they’re equally important and in different ways.... They complement each other extremely well.” This idea of having different but valuing both was important to the women who used egalitarian language. The women in this group ranged from deans to presidents, so the level of position did not seem to impact this perspective. Most of the women had children, but one did not. Julia, who is a university president, said:

We’ve had many conversations about prioritizing our careers together.... There have been times in which because of pressures of my work that he’s needed to be more attentive to things related to me, whether it’s doing the household, running errands, or having dinner ready at night. Then there are times in which his

schedule is busier, and I've been able to be more supportive. So, we've just taken the role that...whoever has the most time is able to do what needs to be done, we just balance it off that way.

Like Julia, the other women who saw their career as equal to their husband's career felt the decision had happened together. A few women talked about decidedly taking turns with their spouse. Faith explained, "In terms of the primary financial foundation of the family, that's been my husband at times and that's been me at times." It is also important to note that the women in this category were all still married at the time of the study. Those women whose marriages ended in divorce were classified as *not supportive* and will be discussed in the following section.

Trailing Spouse

Overwhelmingly, for women to pursue senior level administration, their spouses became the "trailing spouse." Out of the three-quarters of the participants who described their spouse as "trailing" them, most of them had "taken turns" with their spouses but had reached a place where their careers in higher education administration took priority. However, the few exceptions will be mentioned first. For a few women, the decision for her husband to professionally follow her was made from the start. Kimberly, a vice president, explained, "I think we kind of knew it would be that way...when we met. I had the benefits; my salary was much better. It certainly was more constant. So, I think that was kind of understood." In the same way, Kayla said, "We prioritized my career over my husband's [career]. ... It was partly opportunity and partly personality. I was always more ambitious." Kayla's husband worked part-time and helped care for their four children, which gave her "tremendous flexibility."

Repeatedly, the shift from faculty work to administration affected the role that women played in their marriage and family. For many women, the transition into administration pushed them into “primary financial responsibilities” as Faith described. Participants expressed this idea using a variety of terms, but most often, women talked about becoming the primary or even the sole “breadwinner.” The other major reason women prioritized their careers was because they were empty nesters—all children had flown the coop. “When my youngest kid went off to college everything changed. My husband decided that he would be the trailing spouse, that my career would be the primary career,” Sharon, a college president, said. “I was the primary breadwinner. He was totally okay with it. In fact, I think he really enjoyed it, the freedom, the lack of pressure.” Women seemed compelled to express that their husbands chose to follow them and enjoyed their supportive role.

Several other participants shared about the benefits of a spouse who helped with some of the domestic duties. Lola, who describes herself as “the major breadwinner,” explained, “I feel fortunate to have him as a support mechanism, ‘cause that allows me to do quite a bit. It’s kind of the traditional man with the woman at home, but the genders are just switched.” Margaret said that only since she became a president did her and her husband prioritize her career, which was partially connected to her children being out of the house. Margaret said her husband “absolutely takes care of more of the family responsibilities. ... He has picked up probably some things that I would do in my other roles.” In much the same way, Cynthia, a university president, shared about her husband, “When he wanted me to take this position, it was clear that he would definitely be supporting me in this role. That means a lot of things. ... all kinds of household duties

that I don't necessarily have time for." Women listed the domestic tasks that their husbands had taken on from laundry to cooking and from caring for kids to taking the dry cleaning. University presidents, more than the other represented positions, shared about the role of their husband in helping with domestic responsibilities.

A few women described the work their husband did as more flexible, from working in the food industry to teaching to practicing law. Women praised the adaptability of their husband's work. Beverly said, "We didn't know it at the time, but [my husband's] is a flexible career. Where he can do that almost anywhere. It's worked to our advantage." Alexis shared that her husband had no difficulty finding a job each time her work moved their family.

When a spouse had already peaked in his career, women shared that it made it easy to prioritize their own careers. Melissa, a dean, remarried an older man after she divorced her first husband. "He's achieved what he wants to and there's no competition. ... He sees part of his job as helping me navigate my job, because I'm the one who will continue, hopefully, to advance. He is incredibly supportive." Adrienne, a college president, also expressed the idea that her career was "launching" while her husband was "settled" in his work. "My vocation had to take priority as I was just launching. He was not launching. ... I was fortunate in that we were not doing the same vocation at the same time." Women in this study expressed personal comfort in pursuing their career if their spouse had met his career goals.

When Lydia expressed interest in administration, and later a presidency, her spouse said, "I support you 110% and you should go for it. If we have to move, then you know, I'm ready to move." Lydia explained that part of his support stemmed from the

fact that their “children were older” and he was older— “if it meant retiring, he was fine with that.” Retirement was on the horizon for several spouses. Since Jasmine married an older man when she was past child-bearing years, she felt free to pursue her career.

“When I got opportunities to move into upper level administration, he was functionally retired.” Relatedly, Tina explained her husband’s decision to retire when she took a new position. “When we moved, he just retired at that point even though he was only forty-nine. ...He took on all the household tasks, all of them. ... It allowed me to really just focus strictly on the job, which was really helpful.”

Many women described the natural process of prioritizing their own work. Opportunities arose for her husband “but for one reason or another we decided not to take that opportunity,” Betty, a college president, explained. “I think he knows and recognizes that I was willing to move for him, but that’s just not how it worked. I’ve also been the primary breadwinner since I became ... a dean.” Others experienced comparable situations. Cathy felt the dilemma of prioritizing her career over her husband’s career:

That’s a hard thing to do, to go to your spouse and say, “I really want to do this for our family or for my career,” and have your spouse be willing to change his or her career. Because up to that point our careers were sort of in parity. We made about the same amount of money. I think we thought of ourselves as equal partners in terms of our careers. And at one point, that wasn’t the case anymore. We, at a certain point, recognized that with respect to income, I had an opportunity to make more, so it was largely driven by income and lifestyle. ... We recognized that if his career had been the one to take the lead he couldn’t have out-paced me economically because I had more education. I had the doctorate at that point, he didn’t.

Pragmatism won and Cathy pursued her career in administration taking on primary financial responsibility. Though the bottom dollar helped Cathy and her husband make their decision, other women expressed that they simply had more ambition than their husbands. Debra, a vice provost, said, “I think that just because of his personality

and my personality it was kind of assumed from the beginning.... he just doesn't really have that kind of ambition." By the same token, Karen, a dean, expressed that she was "happier" in her career than her husband. And, her husband was clear that he would move wherever she wanted to go. "Not necessarily because it was my career over his, but just because it was more important to me than it was to him." Women explained why their career had taken priority and expressed the importance of their spouse being willing to "follow." Across institutional types, the percentage of trailing spouses was relatively the same except at collegial institutions as shown in Figure 4.3.

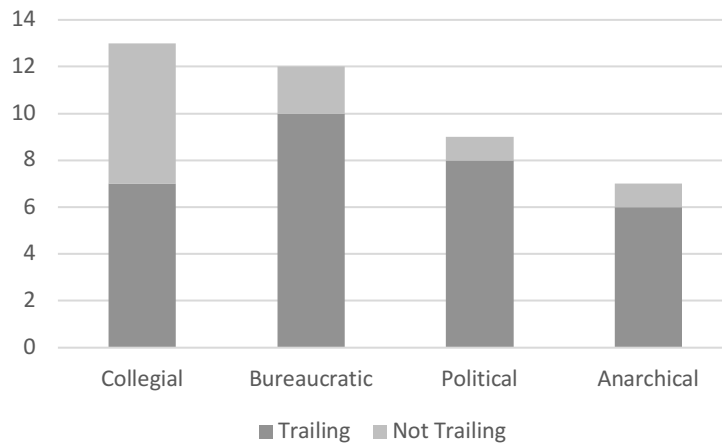


Figure 4.3. Trailing spouse by institutional type. Number of participants out of the total that did and did not have a husband that was trailing her career by institutional type.

Women at collegial institutions were the least likely to have a trailing spouse—38 percent did not have a trailing spouse. Spousal support played an important role that will be discussed in the next section.

Supportive

Women clearly believed that having a supportive husband made their work in senior-level higher education administration possible. Women shared over and over that

they were “fortunate” to have a supportive spouse and repeatedly used a variation of the phrase: “I could not have done this without him.” Support from husbands generally fell in two categories: emotional and practical.

First, emotional support and encouragement boosted women’s perspectives and self-efficacy. One dimension of encouragement was marital cooperation rather than rivalry. Adrienne shared “the key thing” to note about her husband, “He was very, very supportive of my career and loved what I was able to do and wanted to assist me in any way possible to make it successful. He was not threatened by my proficiencies.” The lack of competition between spouses seemed an important notation for several women. Nancy also mentioned this quality in her husband. “He’s a sort of rare person. ... He’s at home in his own skin and never feels the need to compete with me or compare himself to other people. ... But his work background is quite different from mine ... That’s been good for us.” Like Nancy’s husband, Kimberly’s husband worked in a field outside higher education. “I had a PhD, had worked in higher ed for a long time, and so we were different in many ways. ... He’s proud of the work I do and the job I have and is very supportive in that way.” These women and others felt encouraged by their husbands instead of feeling a sense of competition, which allowed them to focus on advancing in their careers without fear of retribution.

Some women expressed the support of a husband as the result of a longstanding relationship. After decades of married life, Karen explained the benefits that accompany a long marriage:

He kind of knows when things are getting stressful, and he’ll pick up extra things around the house, or do dinner. He kind of knows, when I am just too tired of making decisions, I’m going to make no decisions at home. That includes, “What do you want for dinner?” I don’t know, I don’t care, just don’t ask me to decide.

He does. He'll decide. Part of it is just thirty years of understanding how the other one works.

Particularly for women who had been married for many years, a supportive husband offered them things that they did not even know how to express. Others mentioned understanding husbands when they missed dinner or had a great deal of travel for work. Women with a supportive husband seemed unencumbered by the responsibilities at home.

Second, support included some of the duties of the “trailing spouse” like domestic responsibility. This was a recurring sentiment especially among university presidents, whose role is arguably the most demanding. Cynthia, a university president, said, “I could never do this without his support. I mean, I’m not talking about just moral support, but real, tangible, concrete ... grocery shopping or doing the laundry.” Although most of this was addressed in the section on “trailing spouses,” there is an added symbolism when a posture of support motivates the actions of the spouse. Another university president, Margaret, said, “I’ll tell you, if I didn’t have the husband I have, I think it could be very difficult. ... I mean, if I had to do all what’s the traditional wife job, I would have just been exhausted.” Women leaned on both the emotional and the practical support of their husbands to excel in their work.

For those women who traveled for work, a supportive husband made their job possible. Pamela, a college president, shared about her travel and work that “this particular pattern just suited us.” She said, “It came to be something of a joke. If I didn’t have a trip for a long period of time, my husband and son would say, ‘Aren’t you going somewhere sometime soon?’” Pamela said that her husband and son “had a more relaxed

lifestyle” when she travelled, which she viewed as a positive effect of her husband’s support.

Julia articulated the overarching importance of a supportive husband:

One of the things in life balance that allows it to be healthy is having a spouse who values what I do. I will say, and if you’re a female and pursuing a strong future, you’ve got to have a strong husband. Women that are going to be in leadership, women that are going to take on roles, certainly my role, requires a very strong husband. I think sometimes that’s why women have more difficulty in leadership because family members may not always understand and value and appreciate the importance of the wife or the mother – what her role is. But [my husband] has given me space and has valued my professional development and growth, and has been my greatest champion.

Rather than relegate her husband to a secondary role, Julia elevated her husband by calling him “strong” and praising the way he has given her room to grow. Participants clearly express that a supportive husband freed them to pursue their work—free from judgment and competition at home and free from the full load of domestic responsibilities.

Several women, even in supportive marriages, had decided together with their husbands to prioritize their own work. Emily explained that when she was finishing her PhD, her husband told her, “You’re the work-a-holic, you’re the ambitious one. I’m going to stay home with the kids, and you go get tenure.” However, Emily shared, “That was the greatest thing and probably a bit of a mistake too, because we just polarized it. We looked probably like every work-a-holic couple you’ve ever seen, or stereotyped, except that I was in the husband role.” This choice was “a bit of a mistake” because, as Emily went on to explain, her husband “became just this controlling thing at home and I just worked more and more and more.” Emily’s marriage ultimately ended in divorce

because their decision for her career to be prioritized simply did not work well in practice.

In a similar way, Gloria and her husband decided together that they would take turns prioritizing their careers. But, when it became time to prioritize her career, Gloria said, “it became the rest of our relationship.” Gloria shared, “We had always said that when I got called to teach, wherever that was, that would be our next move. It turned out to be the beginning of the end of our relationship.” Gloria worked through a complex situation with her spouse with whom she eventually divorced, which was difficult on many levels. “That was hard because I had not planned on being single,” Gloria said about the divorce. “Not because I think marriage is the end all and be all, but because I am a person who likes companionship. ... That’s not a womanist, feminist, statement about marriage and career, it’s just what happens.” The women who had gone through a divorce described their situations as if they were beyond their control. Nancy’s husband was unsupportive from the point she entered graduate school, which she paid for herself because she believed “it’s what I need to do.” Nancy’s experience of her first husband was that he was a “very mean, controlling person.” Her continued pursuit of her “calling” led to their divorce. “The more I advanced in my education and thrived the more angry and violent he became. That’s what led to the end of our marriage. It was unfortunate, but that’s what happened, and it was necessary.” Several women had reached similar a conclusion that their divorce was “necessary” for them.

Few studies have investigated the influence of the spouse on women’s progression in their career. However, spousal support was correlated with easy advancement. Women who did not have a supportive spouse but desired to advance in

their career reported professional success at the cost of their marriage. The results of this study support the previous studies that have looked at the importance of the family, specifically the spouse, in a woman leader's career advancement (Ezzedeen & Ritchey, 2008; O'Neil & Bilimoria, 2005; Välimäki, Lämsä, & Hiillos, 2009). A qualitative study in Finland investigated the role of the spouse for women managers (Välimäki et al., 2009). Five types of behavior emerged for spouses: counterproductive, determining, flexible, instrumental, supporting. Out of the twenty-nine participants, there were twenty-seven women managers that described a supporting spouse. The high percentage of women managers with supporting spouses aligns with my findings and suggests a closer look at women leaders in higher education. Although other studies have found that a supportive spouse is common for women in leadership roles, little is known about the influence of the spouse's role in a successful woman's career advancement.

Not Supportive

Six women described their husbands as not supportive, and the lack of support contributed to the end of the marriage in every case. Divorce happened for many reasons, participants were clear about that, but the woman's commitment and prioritization of her career was involved in the marital tension in all of these instances. Melissa, a dean, succinctly stated this, "He did not agree with my increasingly visible role at the university and the demands on time and that was part of why we got divorced. There were other reasons, certainly, but it was a big one." After her divorce, Melissa remarried and described her husband as "incredibly supportive." Interestingly, her first husband commuted for his work, which was outside higher education, and her second husband worked in higher education.

Women talked about many factors—from children to personal characteristics—but they all mentioned how it was difficult for their husbands to see them advance in their work. Diana shared her story of divorce after a couple decades of marriage. “Do I think my career had something to do with that? Possibly yes, because I think that ... I became much more career focused and my kids are generally grown.” Although her career was a high priority as her kids had grown up, it was clear from Diana’s perspective that her husband was not supportive of her advancement in higher education. “I sort of grew in my career in a different direction. ... He would have not been willing to move to this institution with me. ... It was difficult for him to watch my career grow and evolve faster than his, I would say.” Of course, Diana explained, there were other reasons that her and her husband split up.

Comparably, Gail expressed how her advancement in higher education affected her relationship with her husband. “I think he enjoyed ... being in the higher education environment. ... But it reached a point where he became uncomfortable with my success.” Gail, whose husband “made a reasonable income but not enough,” explained that she needed to be the “breadwinner for years and years” for her family. “I had to make it work. I had to find a way to make money and be a professional and have kids. But I’ve always known that that’s what I had to do. I did it.” Gail and her husband divorced after her children were grown, and she began to pursue a presidency. “At one point, and I’ll never forget, he said, ‘Well, I don’t want to be the spouse of a college president.’ So, he’s not. I don’t mean to be funny, but he’s not. All that represented was he didn’t want to be second.” For some time, Gail set aside her goal of being a president and continued as a

vice president, but after her divorce, Gail reached her goal of becoming a college president.

One final example, Michelle felt her and her husband had decided together for her to have the more ambitious job. Michelle explained how her husband had stayed home with their son for a few years. “I have been really fortunate to always really like the jobs I’ve had. It both made sense for us, given that dynamic, and it also made sense because work was high anxiety [for him].” Michelle explained the effect of her advancement in her work on her husband. “That gave him a reason not to have to prioritize his career, which is fine. Well, which is fine unless you resent the other person for the decision you thought you made together.” Michelle, recently divorced, admitted she was still processing her divorce. Divorce was a result of several years or even decades of marital tension in each of these cases and all of the conversations were integrated with the senior level administration work of these women.

Path to Administration

As the opening question in the interview, participants were asked about the sequence of their journey into higher education administration. Most participants categorized themselves into one of two groups: (1) the opportunistic administrators or (2) the calculated administrators. Either a woman had not intended to be a college administrator but the opportunity arose (opportunistic administrators) or that is exactly what she had planned (calculated administrators).

Opportunistic Administrators

Over two-thirds of women described themselves as opportunistic administrators. As Gloria put it, “I think I’ve gotten here, in some ways, quite by accident.” Women remarked on their original plans, which included English teacher, stay-at-home mother, hospital administrator, lawyer, corporate executive, and most frequently, a professor. After all of the “I didn’t expect to” comments, women shared how their careers in administration came to be. For most women, their career in administration came by simply taking the next opportunity. Beverly said:

It’s kind of a readiness to learn type of thing, being in a position for the opportunity, or in a posture for the opportunity. Showing your talent enough for someone to recognize your potential and then give you the opportunity. For me, it clearly was not planned, but I was clearly ready when the opportunity came for me to...capitalize on the opportunity.

But for others, administration was something they happened into. Cynthia shared about administrative work early in her career, “It seems like all these different leadership roles would all sort of fall in my lap, and I was happy to do them.” Faith called her administrative career a result of her simply “being a good citizen of [her] department.”

Some of the opportunistic administrators expressed an attraction toward leadership developed over the course of their career. Kennedy, who did not think she was going to go into academic administration, talked about being “drawn to that type of role.” Although she struggled to articulate exactly what drew her, she felt like she was “growing in the right direction” as she continued in higher education administration. Many participants described a desire to lead that developed over time. Adrienne moved into administration early in her career as a professor when she was asked to be an associate dean. “I said “yes” to it because I knew that we needed women in academic

leadership and administration.” Although her posture was one of service, she recounted that as she progressed she began to prepare for higher levels of leadership. “I began to study the office of the president.... I put my hands on every text I could find...so that if I ever had a chance to get an interview I would be prepared.” Women in this study were less likely to say they had a strong desire to lead if they did not feel prepared for the role.

As academic administrators, most women in the study referenced their love of learning while emphasizing their administrative skills. Debra shared about her skills that qualified her to be an administrator. “I really realized that I kind of gravitated towards those tasky kinds of things and getting together a team of people to solve a problem. Basically, I was somebody who could see a need and...start figuring out how to solve that need.” Debra quickly realized through networking with women at her institution that many academics are not drawn towards administration. “I liked doing [administration] more than I liked teaching and research.... I realized that there was a way that I could impact maybe even more lives, and a lot of the ways that you do that as an administrator.” Debra went on to talk about her “love of learning” and desire to share that with students. Though the route was less direct, Debra saw the potential impact on student lives as even greater. Administration was an avenue for some women who desired to make a difference on a larger scale. Emily, who became an administrator before she had tenure, said, “I felt like I could do more if I was working at a higher level, I had a bigger impact, and I think I was always thinking about that impact issue.” Again, we see women who wanted to make a difference.

For other participants, there was even a sense that if they did not resist the move into administration than they ought not be in the position of leadership. Karen shared her story being asked to be interim dean.

After much cajoling I agreed to do it for one year as service to the college. Never expecting that I would actually enjoy it, and once I got into it I found out that I liked it. I was pretty good at it, so I put my name in the hat and was selected as dean in a national search.

Karen's experience was not uncommon. Several participants told stories about looking around the room, the department, or the institution and realizing they were the best fit or being handpicked for the position even if they took it begrudgingly. Nikki, a vice president, said, "I have to say that although I didn't want it, I wasn't searching for it, I in some ways agreed to it reluctantly, there have been many rewards and many, many challenges, and I would do it again." Nikki framed her role as a dean as a service to her colleagues, "I knew that somebody had to be willing to put their own agenda on a back burner for a time to serve the rest of their colleagues and to enable everybody else to do what they love so much."

Calculated Administrators

An enjoyment of leadership led many women into higher education administration, even in the face of resistance and inevitable pushback. A few participants pointed out that they liked thinking about "the bigger vision." Joyce explained it this way, "I really enjoy several of the bigger picture elements of the job that I had not been able to do as the lower level administrator and faculty member up until now. I really enjoy, honestly, the prospect of leading the institution in a certain direction."

Alexis pursued senior level administration after having done “pretty significant administration” early in her career. “I think it was because I just always like kind of being on the administrative side of things, and organizing things and getting things done. It’s kind of a natural step for me, as much as I loved research and I loved teaching.” Moving into administration was not always an easy or seamless transition. Women encountered resistance between faculty and administration. Michelle recounted how she enjoyed administration but dealt with the tension between the academic and administrative sides.

A senior faculty member said to me after a meeting, “Man, you are good at administration, I would hate it if someone said that about me.” I thought, “Oh, I don’t even know how to respond to that.” Because I was just being myself. This is just my set of skills. This is who I am. For me, higher ed administration is really a wonderful combination, because I love academia and my gifts and skills are not just academic they’re also administrative. But it’s also tough, I think administration in higher ed is tough for anyone to be in. I mean I meet people at conferences who say, “Oh, you’re the dean, you went to the dark side.” And I think, “Wait, really? You met me like 30 seconds ago. You have no idea whether I’m on the dark side or not.”

Michelle had to navigate the perceptions of faculty alongside her love of administration. Several participants articulated hearing similar sentiments about switching sides from colleagues when they moved from the professoriate into administration.

However, not all women struggled with the authoritative nature of the role. Sharon reflected on her experiences through childhood and early career as formative in her desire to lead. “Leading organizations became something that I was good at.” Similarly, Pamela said, “I tend to take leadership roles. I’m very often the person who writes the report. That’s a position of power.” When asked if she liked power, Pamela said without hesitation, “Yes.... I’m also aware that it’s perilous and its misuse is always side-by-side with its proper use.” This embrace of power was rare among the women in

the study—though older participants seemed to feel more confident with their positional authority. Gail, a president with over forty years of experience in higher education, said, “I’ve always seen myself as...an ‘educator at-large.’ I think we’re all educators and some people educate in the classroom and some people educate beyond the classroom. That’s how I see myself, is really an educator and a leader.”

Calculated administrators found they needed to be geographically flexible in order to achieve their goals. Mary explained that she taught at a religiously-affiliated institution for a decade. “During that time [I] realized that the landscape for women leaders had still much to be developed. That we were in no ways, no place, close to being able to affirm and elevate one of our women into a position of full leadership.” As a result, Mary pursued additional credentials with the intention of working at a secular institution, “I thought in academia without being confined to a biblical type of interpretation of women and men, there will be more openness.” Mary followed the open doors without compromising her goals and ultimately became a president.

Other women described ways that they sought out or pursued administrative opportunities. Melissa always wanted to be a dean. “I thought I wanted to be in administration...but it happened a lot earlier than I had really, I think, anticipated. That’s been an interesting part of the journey is that I’m always young and everybody tells me that – all the time.” A few participants noted the moments when they realized they were ready for advancement. Lydia explained, “If I’m honest about it, it was that sense I had, ‘If I were president, I would do that differently.’” Diana, also, recognized that she had a desire to lead when she began to consider how she would have handled situations that her supervisor faced: “I had been kind of the person behind the person, so the person behind

the front-line leader. I just really knew that I was ready to start being the one to make decisions.” Other participants expressed something similar through stories. This gradual realization that they were ready for the next step of leadership sparked a desire in them. Mentors, specifically sponsors, often played a role in women being able to recognize their readiness for advancement.

Second Career Academic

About one-third of the participants in this study started out in a different profession, and the majority of those had not planned on ending up in higher education. Their backgrounds include public accounting, engineering, law, marketing and communications, consulting, banking, industry, human resources, ministry, and nursing. Women moved into higher education for a variety of circumstantial reasons—both personal and professional—from a love of teaching to flexibility to a personal calling.

Most commonly women mentioned entering higher education for the family-friendly nature of the work and schedule. Cathy explained, “I always intended to get the doctorate, teach while they were little, and then once they got to a certain age, go back to industry.” Similarly, Destiny said, “Then I had my first child and decided I didn’t want the long hours that lawyers needed to put in, that I wanted to have a more family-friendly job.” This sentiment was echoed by several women, but many rescinded this as they moved into administration. However, a few women found administration more conducive to family life than the professoriate.

A sense of calling led a handful of women into higher education. Julia attributed the career shift to her personal faith:

I loved banking. I loved business. I loved the finance deals and things that I was involved in. So, it really just came out of a deep commitment to seek where the Lord would have me and move ... He called me to teach. I loved teaching. I left the corporate world and went to higher education and absolutely enjoyed that transition, too.

Previous work provided helpful context, fresh ideas, and leadership skills. Rebecca shared the tension she felt between the academy and her work in corporate settings.

“Because of my resistance initially of not wanting to use my corporate experience in the academy, I was really...bifurcating myself and have come to really understand the way in which life experiences really shape who we are and that I am always in process.” In different ways, women expressed the journey of discovering what prior work experience outside the academy equipped them for their work in higher education.

Obstacles

Obstacles are additional factors that affected the sequencing of a woman’s career. Women made sense of the costs of their experiences differently. However, the sacrifices felt by many include having a family at the price of career advancement. Faith articulated, “Things have changed, but 30 years ago that was not the case. My family life, which was a priority, would absolutely require making sacrifices professionally.” For Joyce, those professional sacrifices came in the form of publications. Joyce shared, “Now when I look back on [my family and work], I don’t have any regrets, but I do see the cost to my research trajectory.” If having a family did not equate to a professional sacrifice, it often went the other way—professional success at the cost of family relationships. I have addressed the challenges of family, so for the remainder of this section, I will look at three obstacles that impacted sequencing: pay gap, preparation, and policy.

Pay Gap

The stigma of pay, more than the pay rate itself, impacted the sequencing of women's careers. Participants were not asked directly about pay, but the social stigma around equitable pay emerged as a notable obstacle in women's advancement. Although some women talked about discrepancies in pay between men and women of equal ranks, others talked about the underlying assumptions that produced these discrepancies. Two underlying assumptions were referenced several times: (1) the husband as the one who supports the wife and family, and (2) women as less mobile.

First, and most commonly, the assumption that the husband supports the wife and family. Sydney discussed this assumption that the wife had little or no responsibility to support the family. "That kind of old notion of compensation, which is certainly not unique to [this institution]. It was as much part of our water as anywhere else up until about 10 years ago." Thinking that her identity as a woman had something to do with it, Adrienne explained how she came to be paid less in a presidency position. She also mentioned that she was an internal candidate who knew how desperate the financial situation was. Adrienne admitted, "I think they played on my good graces there and paid me less because I was female and married. Some of the old heads, male heads, on the search committee thought well, my husband could support me, so it didn't really matter what I made." The notion that women had less responsibility for the family is clearly outdated but interesting how many women encountered it.

Second, women are less mobile. Carolyn shared, "There still are compensation biases or discrepancies or differences. ... I think there tends to be an opinion that [women are] less likely to be as mobile. Therefore, [institutions] can perhaps ask for more and

compensate a little bit less.” The findings of this study call this into question since most, if not all, women had moved to a new institution in a new geographical location during their career. However, women also shared how they take family into consideration, which may hinder their mobility.

Several of the women in the study were instigators at institutions in championing equal salaries for men and women. Trinity shared about when she “confronted the president” in her second year about the pay differential between men and women.

I had come from the public school originally where everything was sort of out there. In my second year [at a private institution], I discovered there was a difference. And, back in those early, early, early years, people came in and negotiated. There was no faculty salary schedule. So, people came in and negotiated their contract with whatever they could get. And I found out, so ... I went to the president. It was after a faculty meeting, and I just marched right up—now, bear in mind, I was about maybe 27 years old. And, I said to the president, “You know? It’s come to my realization that a faculty member, if they’re male and if they’re married and have children, they make more money with the same credentials than I do.” And he said, “Well, you know, their needs are different.” I said, “Well, what if I’m the sole supporter of my parents?” And he said, real quickly, “Are you?” And I said, “Well, I don’t really think it’s any of your business to know that. It would be my responsibility, but it is important that I’m paid in the same level as other faculty are.”

Trinity did not see immediate shifts, but over the next few years, the administration gradually raised the pay to meet a salary schedule. “When faculty would get say a one or two percent raise, I’d get a six or seven percent raise. They never back paid me and ... they graduated it in over three years. That was how far behind I was.” Only a few women were on the ground floor of making these shifts happen. Kayla shared about her experience when her institution acknowledged that women had not been paid at the same pay scale as men—even with the same qualifications. “They worked with the women faculty to adjust salaries. I got quite a nice adjustment after that, so that was an acknowledgement of needing to right a past wrong.”

Preparation

Among women who had taken the traditional path to administration through the professoriate, there was a recurring admittance that they had not been formally trained for their work. They had been trained in their discipline and trained to teach, but never had they been formally trained to lead. Kennedy went so far as to call this lack of training her “biggest obstacle.” Madison also found managing faculty difficult. She shared the shock of moving into administration, “I just assumed, because I’d been a good faculty member and I had done the right things for the right reasons ... I just kind of assumed everybody was like me. Boy, was I in for a rude awakening that first year as dean.” Madison explained how she learned a lot about people and managing them—things she had never been officially taught.

Clearly, these women have managed even without being properly prepared. Even so, women explained how they were mostly self-taught administrators. “While there are some transferrable skills from being a good teacher or a good program director or a good department chair, there was nothing ... that prepared me for some of the kinds of work I would need to do and ... things I would need to know.” Nikki said, “I read everything and I still do read everything I can get my hands on ... on leadership. ... I feel like I’ve learned everything by the seat of my pants.” About a fifth of participants commented on their ill-prepared transition and lack of formal administrative training. “Of course, nobody trains to be a dean. ... Nobody really sends you to dean school until you get to be dean,” Sydney said. If *nobody* trains to be a dean, the playing field is leveled for men and women and this is not actually a unique obstacle for women. However, the lack of formal preparation does appear to have impacted the speed of career advancement for

women. Women perceived formal training as an obstacle for various reasons including being the first woman in the job or not being accepted in their role. After taking on an administrative role, women mentioned training workshops and leadership development programs that helped them learn the ropes as well as the role of informal preparation and mentorship

Policy

With the wide coverage of policy and gender in the news, it may be a surprise that policy was not central to the story of most of the participants. Most of those mentions were reflective of earlier days in their careers before maternity leave policies, though a few touched on the complexities attached to tenure. Some of these experiences overlap with the uniqueness of being the first woman to navigate them. Donna shared her experience as the first tenure-track woman faculty in her department to have a baby. “The things that were the norm [were] folks didn’t have any experience; that was long before there were any family leave policies at all at the institution.” Fair family laws were one of the institutional pieces that Mary mentioned must be addressed.

Those kinds of institutional policies and practices must bend. It’s just bending toward the right thing. It’s not becoming less than so you can accommodate something that’s less than, it’s making it family friendly for everyone. So, there’s some institutional work that has to be done. You can’t just sit back and assume that this is going to happen.

Mary believed the administration has a proactive role in “creating opportunities for women to know” that the policies are equitable.

The other policy piece that was mentioned was stopping the tenure clock. Melissa shared that being a woman dean has helped her female faculty feel “comfortable being a parent, male or female, in my college.” She had advocated for “automatic stop clocks for

both genders” because it was viewed differently for men and women. “It shouldn’t be a choice, and it shouldn’t be perceived as I need help, it should just be a default when you have a child adopted or live birth.”

However, Rebecca warned that even if there are family-friendly policies, women, in particular, need to be “real attentive to how those policies are applied, because there is still a level of subjectivity that allows an institution to operate within the parameters of the law.” Kayla experienced that the existence of a policy did not guarantee adherence.

Universities can have their policies, but the way that people behave is the way the people behave. You can’t legislate that. Even if an institution kind of officially embraces women in certain positions, it can still subtly support a kind of sexism when it comes to certain decisions that are being made.

Rebecca and Kayla’s comments serve as a reminder that policies do matter, but an institution’s structure does not exist apart from its’ culture.

CHAPTER FIVE

Findings: Culture

How do women academic leaders perceive and respond to the cultural norms?

Culture is a powerful facet of women's experience in higher education. Where structure is the framework of the game, culture is the way people play the game. Much of culture lies in what is unstated. Culture, according to Edgar Schein, is "a pattern of basic assumptions invented, discovered, or developed by a given group as it learns to cope with its problems of external adaptation and internal integration" (Schein, 1985, p. 6). Schein identifies three levels of culture from the most visible to the invisible: artifacts, espoused beliefs and values, and basic underlying assumptions. It is in the third level, the basic underlying assumptions, where beliefs and values are unconscious and unstated. Basic underlying assumptions took women by surprise in their experiences of institutional culture. Women shared about deviance from the culture, acceptance level of the climate, and gendered expectations.

Deviance

When asked if women had ever acted outside the norms of their culture, the responses were varied and random. For example, women's responses centered around a new academic course they introduced or how they knew nothing about the way things were done when they moved to a new institution. Kelly, a dean, talked about moving institutions, "It took me a while to make the shift between the two different cultures and the two different protocols between the two schools. ... It took about a year to really feel

as though I was ... not so much of a fish out of water.” However, under the auspices of other questions, women shared about ways that they deviated. Reflecting on how recently women have become business deans, Cathy, herself a dean, said, “In my lifetime I’ve seen that change. Today, about 20% of business school deans, that are accredited business schools, are led by women. You’re more likely to be a university president as a woman than a business school dean.” In Cathy’s explanation of women leaders, she considered that her role as a woman business school dean was a deviation from the norms of the culture.

Cathy explained that the overall average of women in higher education shows great parity among students, but that’s not the case in every discipline. “In my world, 70% of my students are men. And probably 70% of my faculty are men.” In Cathy’s world, she is deviating from what is normal. Similarly, Gail, a college president, simply said, “I’m a little bit of a new entity for this school.” But as several participants alluded and Cynthia, a college president, explained, “Once you understand [the culture], you can sort of navigate it and play your own cards.” As women learned to navigate their culture, many became accustomed to the things that made them different from the culture, which made ways they had deviated from the culture more difficult for most women to describe. As participants shared about their experiences, three ways women deviated from their institutional culture became clear: being the first woman, focusing on building trust, and implementing a leadership style.

Being the First Woman

When participants were the first woman in a role, they fundamentally deviated from what was normal for the institution. As the first woman dean at her institution,

Nancy explained, “If you’re the first woman coming into a job, there will be systems anxiety. It’s just the way it is.” Over half of the women in this study were the “first woman” in their current role, and even more participants had been the “first woman” at other points in their career.

Women were accustomed to being the first woman. When participants were asked about their experience as the first woman in their role, they typically started listing all of the times they had been a first. As a first woman dean at an anarchical university, Donna shared, “I had been the first woman in many roles before that, so I’m not sure it was anything particularly unique at that point.” Although also “a first many times,” Adrienne, a college president, had experienced challenges along the way. “Some of these firsts meant I was facing obstacles, because people would question if I was trying to usurp someone else’s position, a man’s, or if I was really claiming a rightful place.” Adrienne became president in the middle of an institutional crisis, “The school was really about to go under when I began. ... The board, I think, expected a miracle worker who looked like a man.” Adrienne broke the mold but ultimately turned things around at the institution—saving it from demise. Both Donna and Adrienne deviated from their institutional norms, but their perspectives differed.

Life experience had convinced women that some differences were irrelevant. Beverly shared that her being a woman president was “a celebration for many people [at the institution] ... after having a plethora of male presidents.” At her level in her career, Beverly believed gender is not something worthy of her focus. “If you think about it, then it feels strange to you. If you focus on it, it can alter your perspective, and in these roles, you cannot ever afford for that to happen, unless it is in a positive way.” Many

women shared similar feelings about their gender identity as being something they do not consider as relevant in their professional life. Alexis, a college president, explained, “I’ve always tried to kind of downplay the fact that I’m a woman leader. It’s just: I’m a leader and I do my job. So, I’ve never really tried to make a big deal out of being the first woman.” However, when Alexis became her university’s first woman president, she realized that it was big deal to others that she was a woman in that position. “I’ve had to sort of look at that through a little bit different lens than I would normally and embrace the fact that I am a woman leader and that that actually mattered ... and sent a very, very strong message to the broader community.”

Several women expressed a moment where they realized that their gender did, in fact, matter. Extending Alexis’ experience, Gail gave a reminder that “if you are the first or the only, or you’re one of a few, you cannot underestimate the importance of what you stand for. I mean, the importance of what that means to people.” In her first year of becoming the first woman president, Gail was speaking at a luncheon for a community group of about 80 women. Gail explained that before the luncheon began, “the coordinator said, ‘You know what? We just need to pause and we need to acknowledge that this is an historic occasion.’ I was thinking, ‘Oh, I wonder what it is. I’m new to this town, new to this campus. I wonder what it is.’” Gail shared her surprise when the coordinator said, “We have a woman president of this university.”

These women were from all over town and even a couple of neighboring communities, and I thought, “Oh, that’s right, I represent for everybody much more than just being a president of the university.” I tell students this all the time. ... We stand on the shoulders of everybody who’s come before us. It’s our responsibility to be inclusive in our approach to leadership and to reach back and bring people along with us—especially women. Because I couldn’t have gotten here if it hadn’t been for ... people who’d come before me and really paved the way as well.

Gail made a strong point that women had come before her to make a way for where she is today. Overall, only a select few of the participants acknowledged the important work that allowed for their freedom to lead. Margaret, also a university president, commented on her lack of attention to gender: “I really never thought that much about being the first female, but I realize it’s significant. I’m just kind of at the right age where I don’t really ever ... I personally didn’t have to deal with barriers to progression.” This rang true with many of the women in this study. In an effort to get where they were going, they ignored gender and made it a moot point to the best of their ability.

Although presidents notably experienced being a first in a celebratory fashion, they also talked about the unpreparedness of the institution to handle their husbands. As the first woman president in the state at her institutional type, Betty explained some initial questions she and her husband faced:

They don’t really know what to do with my husband oftentimes. The role of a female spouse is pretty clear. Either the spouse chooses to do a number of things at the institution, or they choose to follow their career and kind of pick and choose the things that they’ll do at the institution. That was a bit unique for people.

Even things like, “How do we address you?” Because usually it’s Dr. and Mrs. So, “Do we do Dr. and Mr.?” Just those types of crazy things. “How do we acknowledge him at graduation, because usually the wives had been acknowledged at graduation, do we continue to acknowledge your husband?” Just protocol types of things that are a bit different for people. ... I think that people have been very gracious and very accommodating and willing to help us figure it out, because we’ve never done this before either.

Betty mentioned titles and traditional roles. Other women presidents talked about on campus events or women’s social groups that were no longer a fit for the president’s spouse. Some women presidents also expressed, as Sharon did, “there have been times when I wished that my husband was more of a traditional wife.” At times, women felt

the burden of having to be both the business person as well as the hospitable and relational one. Sharon shared about a running joke with colleague women presidents about somebody they call “Judy,” who is “a super-duper president’s wife who just did all of the traditional female things of making friends with the donors and traveling with her husband and sending the thank you notes and preparing the meals and remembering the birthdays and adding all of those personal touches” that make a president successful. Sharon said, “There are times I wish my husband was more like [Judy], because that would help me. ... He’s an asset to my presidency in other ways because he’s a very impressive learned personable man.” Sharon shared how being a woman president is a different experience for women—especially as the first woman president who inherits the expectations of past presidents. New protocols had to be established and being first had its’ hiccups, women explained, but in general, women presidents emphasized the warm welcome they were given.

Women who were firsts in the dean role described a different experience from presidents. Women deans felt they were expected to embody all of the stereotypical feminine characteristics. Joyce explained her unique dean role in which she was perceived as a campus mom. Joyce shared that this identity “is actually sort of not how I perceive myself, or how I would like to be known. But I think I’m a woman, I’m kind to people, I have kids, people connect those dots on their own and that’s why I use the word projection.” Other women expressed similar assumptions that as the first woman dean they would be more understanding, gentle, or empathetic. On the other hand, Michelle explained how she is viewed as deviating from the institutional culture as a dean, “All the time, I’m acting outside of what has been normal by virtue of being a non-tenured

woman. ... But in some ways, that gives me a kind of space and freedom that I'm kind of already outside of some norm." Whereas many women deans seemed to fight against the stereotypes, a few women like Michelle embraced the liberties of their uniqueness.

Emily, a dean, explained, "I'll be honest, I feel naive now, I never thought my gender mattered. I just didn't. I never thought about it." About two weeks after Emily started her job she found out about a lawsuit that included many of the women professors in a pay grievance against the university.

Whoops. You would have thought they would have told the first woman dean that. Because the other thing that it did, if I'm perfectly honest, is it shook my confidence. Because I had just arrived. I was fired up. I was ready to be a dean and suddenly I thought, "Am I here because I'm a woman?" Like I said, I've never actually let it matter, and suddenly I thought, "Oh my goodness, they're dealing with this crap and I didn't know." I should have... In hindsight I still don't know what I would have asked, because I wouldn't have asked.

Emily was in an uncomfortable position at her institution. However, she allowed her perspective to shift: Because of the rarity of being a woman dean, Emily said: "I get more credit, I get to do some amazing stuff. ... Someday I hope that's not the case... I hope I don't get those invitations just because I'm a woman. Right now, I do and I take them. It's great." By embracing her gender, Emily took opportunities she may have otherwise missed.

Looking across institutional types, Figure 5.1 illustrates that collegial institutions by far had the most "first" women while anarchical institutions clearly had the smallest percentage.

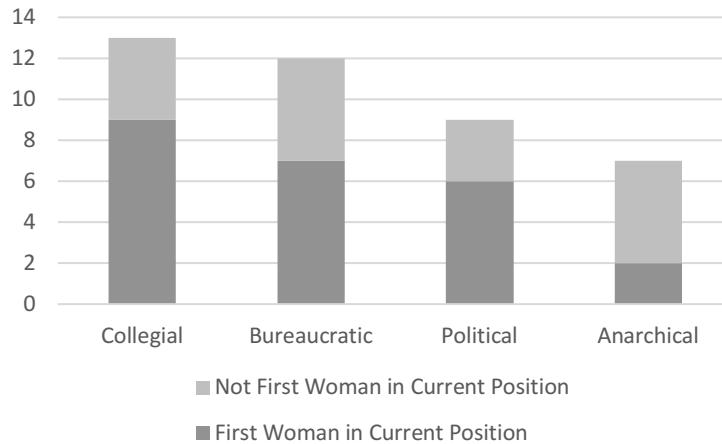


Figure 5.1. First woman in current position by institutional type. Number of participants out of the total that were and were not the first woman in their current position by institutional type.

Birnbaum describes anarchical institutions as the most ethnically, religiously, and politically diverse of the four archetypes (1988). The finding that less women were “firsts” at anarchical institutions may be correlated with the diverse population, including women that have already held their positions. However, it is also important to note that the sample of women from anarchical institutions were all deans and vice presidents, so the positional level may affect this finding as well.

Building Trust

Although every leader must build trust, women in this study expressed that being a woman necessitated more energy toward building trust than male counterparts. Women deviated from the norm by their enormous relational efforts. This category took a while to name, but ultimately, it became clear that women were repeatedly talking about their strategies for building trust. What also became evident was that women felt they had to earn trust that may be inherently given to a male. Michelle explained the difference she

experienced in the classroom and how that extended into her experience as a dean. Michelle compared herself to an older male colleague, “I...had to earn a kind of respect that people granted him before they knew anything about him. He never believed that this dynamic was true; that he walked into a room with any more credibility than me. But I’m also happy to do that.” Although Michelle shared that she did indeed earn that credibility with time, she articulated something many women seemed to dance around. Women emphasized the importance of relationships because they believed they had to earn the trust of colleagues and subordinates.

Many women, like Anna, expressed a high value on relationships. “I’ve always focused on the importance of relationships. By the time, here in particular, when I became president, I had invested my life in a lot of student events, a lot of faculty events. I tried to go to just about everything.” Beyond her participation in campus life, Anna described that an availability to listen was a key element. “I always tried to listen, and I had an open door. So, by developing relationships with other people here, they were prepared to accept me in a higher-level position ... primarily because I had spent the time investing in relationships with them.” Listening was a consistent piece of women’s relational strategies. Including for Cynthia, who explained, “Even the people who seemed to be negative ... somehow there was always wisdom in listening to that perspective. ... They always have something to contribute.” In another part of the interview, Cynthia stated, “I believe that everything is about relationships. Anything that deals with people—it’s about relationships. So, relationships are critical in everything.” Relationship building in higher education was even compared to marriage by one participant. Kelly explained, “The same sorts of skills that come into forging a healthy

marriage are not that far apart from fostering a healthy collegian: honesty, openness, ability to talk/listen, a willingness to be persuaded if what I'm thinking is not exactly the most healthy thing to do." Kelly explained that these are skills in relationship building that have proved necessary for her in the academy, especially as a leader. Participants agreed that relationships were central to their work.

Even as some women prized listening, other women regarded helping, or acting on what they heard. Destiny, a provost, explained, "I think at the core of it you have to want to help people. ... I think that's really foundational. ... The way you advance the institution is by making sure that the people who report to you are also interested in advancing the institution." The way you get people on board, according to Destiny, is "by supporting them in their work." In other words, Destiny uses the strategy of helping others to get "buy-in" from people in the organization, so in turn, they will want to advance the institution.

Several women mentioned a strategy of getting to know every person who works under them. Kennedy, a dean, shared how she makes "it a point to know something about all of our faculty and all of our leaders in the program." Similarly, Madison, a vice president, said, "every time I take a new role, I go meet one on one with each of the people that report up through my unit," which is admittedly hundreds of people. Madison explained, "I think what that has done, initially, because I was always the new person from the outside ... is that created a relationship with every single person. ... There were people who had worked there for years that didn't know each other in the building." Though time consuming, women viewed this as an essential piece of their leadership even though it was not commonplace in the culture of their institutions.

After investing time in cultivating relationships, women shared how they used their relational power to combat gender bias. Gail believed in “the importance of relating.” Gail explained her strategy:

Here’s what I do: I try to connect with every single person before a meeting. Like, I’m on a search committee for something in our system office, a position. I’m not chairing the meeting, one other president is chairing it, I’m not chairing it, but I’m the other president representative. I go around the room before the meeting and I shake everyone’s hands and say, “Nice to see you again. So glad we’re working on this together.” Whatever it is, I don’t know. But I make a direction connect with them because ... Then I look them in the eye, I mean I make a connection. ...

That’s important because once someone can see another person’s humanity, it’s a little more difficult to discredit them.

In Gail’s experience, the relational dimension majorly affected the way work was accomplished. Subtly, women deviate from their institutional culture to bring about positive change without even realizing how their success came to be. The results of this section were scattered (rather than tied to one question) but the idea of cultivating relationships to build trust infused all types of conversations.

Leadership Style

Although leadership style is an expression of the individual, it is received by the culture in ways that make women feel accepted or deviant. Previous work experience was one part of shaping a woman’s leadership style. In her role as a vice president, Ann felt her law background helped her “feel comfortable with what are traditionally male understood characteristics: decisive, strategic.” Ann explained the benefit of the expectations for lawyers, “When you’re a lawyer, they expect you to be in charge and they don’t see it as a gender issue because they’ve hired you. They’re paying you \$350 an hour to make decisions for them, or help them make decisions.” For Ann, her expert

knowledge minimized her gender, but not all participants had experienced this freedom. The issue of gender became the preface to almost every participant's comments on leadership style. Mary, a college president, explained the dilemma, "I'm careful not to label everything gender, because I think in some ways, in the future, what we're working for is that he has attributes like her and she has attributes like him.... We're all leaning in toward wholeness together. But I know that we're not there yet." Mary offered an integrated perspective of leadership style, which includes feminine traits and masculine traits. Jasmine, a vice president, clearly explained this concept:

To me, it's less about gender and more about style. I know men who operate at a more feminine style; what you would consider the traditionally feminine style, and women who operate in more of the masculine style. The thing that I think is interesting is that women have more flexibility to use either the masculine style or the feminine style. The social conventions and pressures and conversations, you know, yeah, they'll call you the "B" word if you operate in a masculine conversational style, but I think there's less stigma to that than there is for a man operating with a feminine style. So, I think the advantage that I have as a woman is I have access to more tools in my toolbox, in terms of management style and management techniques.

Jasmine articulated these styles as options for all leaders, which was a shared sentiment by a few other women. Gail explained how she tried to "show all parts of being a leader and being a woman." Explaining her practice of doing this, Gail said:

I'm a real clear thinker, I'm very straight forward, and I know that sometimes that can intimidate people or turn people off, or they think I'm being too bold. So ... I show my kinder side, my softer side. I might ask about their family, or I might show emotion or empathy.

Alternatively, Joyce differentiated her leadership style from traditional feminine styles, "When they encounter me in a meeting setting or a one on one...and I'm doing the hard thing, and being really, really candid about what's going to happen and why and how we have to proceed, it surprises people." Joyce concluded that most people expected that she

would “be more gentle...or timid or slow. I think that’s probably unique to women in a way it may not be to men.” Many other participants made it clear that they were not a “typical” woman leader. Cathy explained that women have to “consciously overcome” certain stereotypes. “I think there’s also a tendency to believe ... This is not a fair assessment, that for whatever reason a woman in administration will be kinder, softer, easier, nicer, maybe not be able to make the hard decisions.” Some women clarified that they were not these stereotypical traits while others expressed traditionally feminine characteristics.

One such characteristic is a relational awareness. In her role as a vice provost, Debra described her connectedness with others as fundamental to her leadership style. “I have very strong emotional intelligence and ... I am able, in some ways it’s a burden, but I am able to kind of look at somebody or be in conversation with somebody and kind of know how they’re feeling.” Several women described themselves as sensitive to the relational aspect of their work, which included an adaptability to the needs of their coworkers. Julia, a college president, defined her relational style as one that values “the whole person.” She explained that she wants employees to work hard, but she said, “I understand that they have families and personal things that are important. It’s important for me that they are healthy within their family relationships. That they’re healthy spiritually. That they are healthy physically.” Women with this perspective believed that relational intentionality was important to each person’s ability to do their work as well as to the environment. Diana shared her experience of bringing her relational leadership style to her role of vice president at a new institution:

When I started here I told my executive assistant, “I want everyone’s birthdays put on the calendar.” You know? I’d bring in a cake or I’d buy flowers or we’d

go out to lunch for somebody's birthday. She's like, "We don't do that here." My assistant provost, and I said, "Oh, well, we do now. There's a new sheriff in town." I actually think that they now like it. I think it's become an important part of our culture. I do think that there's, one, an expectation that women will be more nurturing as a woman leader, but...in some ways, [it] makes for a more collegial environment.

Diana explained how she deviated from the cultural norms by being herself in a new environment. Her insistence stemmed from her belief that a relational approach was an important way to place value on her colleagues.

Collaboration. Collaboration was by far the most common way for participants to describe their leadership style. From an affinity toward working collaboratively to a reputation as a collaborator, women expressed collaboration as central to their approach. "My mantra is collaborate, collaborate, collaborate," Mary said. Participants touted women as particularly "good at processing complexity" and figuring out "next steps," as Joyce articulated. Among the participants in this study, collaboration was described in primarily three ways: (1) flattened hierarchy, (2) empowerment, and (3) input or team effort. Anna mentioned all three elements as she self-reflects, "I believe in developing a team. My team has valuable input that's important to the final decisions. It's not so much a top-down as it is a collaboration." Not all participants who described themselves as collaborative touched on all three pieces.

Flattened hierarchy. Flattened hierarchy emerged out of participants' views of their own position within the organization. Destiny explained, "I like to lead by example. ... I don't expect people to do things that I wouldn't do myself. In other words, there's no job that's beneath me. I expect others to feel the same way. We're all in it together." Some women used organizational structure to describe their style. Adrienne said, "I've

kind of flattened the hierarchy, and I see myself more at the bottom of the pyramid, empowering others, rather than at the top of the pyramid. It's a different modality. My org chart has me kind of at the "v" at the bottom." Similarly, Cynthia believed in a more "horizontal-type organization," as she put it. "In other words, I don't think that everything comes up to the one person ... I believe that you can empower more people to make decisions at various levels." Cynthia connected a flatter hierarchy to the concept of empowerment.

Empowerment. Participants described empowerment as the aspect of their leadership style that seeks to work with others and empower them to do their jobs well. Destiny described herself as "supportive of people," in which she explained that she seeks to empower her subordinates. "I'm open to people's ideas.... I don't have to be the smartest person in the room. I like to give people a lot of leeway to do things that need to be done in the way that they think they should be done." Empowerment, as participants saw it, accomplished greater participation and confidence among people on their team, which is important because Kiara, like many participants, believes "it takes a team to make things happen." Kiara felt her team orientation was an important component of her role as a vice president. Also serving as a vice president, Carolyn explained, "I tend to give credit to the team versus individually, in the hopes of engendering participation by the folks that work with me.... That's the way it should be, I think."

Empowering people can also lessen the pressure on the leader to do it all. Nikki, a vice president, shared an example of empowering her faculty members to take more responsibility with committee work. "Since that step I think that my style has been even

more consultative and delegating, sharing responsibility, not taking responsibility for having to do it all myself, but yet, at the same time, providing direction and leadership.”

Empowering others seems to have helped focus the work of several of the participants.

Adrienne shared:

I have grown much more comfortable in collaborating with men, without fearing that they would question my competence, if I’m collaborative. Some people think to be powerful you have to be unilateral. I don’t think that’s the case. I think collaboration is a sign of strength.

Through her collaborative efforts, Adrienne gathers people around her who she said “have gifts that I don’t have and to listen to them. I think I have grown in my capacity to seek wise counsel.” In the realm of collaboration, women expressed that both empowerment and input from others helped them make “better” decisions.

Input. According to the participants in this study, women use more input from their community to make decisions, which is admittedly more “time consuming” but ultimately viewed as worth the extra effort. Mary believed collaboration can “create life, rather than doing it in an insulated way, which often is not very economically feasible and certainly isn’t product feasible, because you don’t have as good a product as when you collaborate and you get minds around the table.” However, not all participants saw input as equaling consensus. Anna, for example, explained that her staff does not “always get what they want, but they are very free and even encouraged to state their opinions. Although they know at the end of the day, I might trump everybody.” This adds another dimension to collaboration. Rather than team leadership, where everyone has equal say, collaborative leadership is expressed as creating “a culture where everybody feels comfortable agreeing, disagreeing – having their say,” as Karen, a dean,

described. Karen makes clear that at the end of the day, she makes the decision and moves forward—expecting everyone to be on board. Diana shared anecdotal evidence of a challenge to her collaborative approach.

We were talking about a controversial issue, and I wanted to enact a certain policy. We were talking about it at a meeting.... I was trying to convince them. I was trying to sell. And, my dean, one of my deans who worked for me finally said, “You know, Maria, you are the boss. You can just tell us what to do. We don’t have to like it.” I realized, “He’s right.” At the end of the day I am the boss, and I can tell him what to do and if he doesn’t like it he still has to do it. That would not be my go-to stance...that’s not the place I would go to unless it was the last resort. But, him saying that has actually made me think. You know? There’s some things that I just think we need to do, and if I can convince them all and get them to come along willingly, great. But, if not, we’re just going to do it anyway. I think that was a good lesson for me to learn as a female leader.

Margaret shared a somewhat similar experience but came to a different conclusion.

When Margaret was a provost, her vice provost said to her, “You know...we don’t always have to reach consensus.” Margaret replied, “I realize that, but if we do then it’s going to be easier to be able to affect the change we need to affect.” She explained that her strategy was “to bring people along, almost to help them reach the conclusion” that she had reached without telling them. “I’m a much more collaborative leader. ... I don’t know if that’s a female trait or not. They just hadn’t done it before I got there.” For both Diana and Margaret, colleagues seemed to cast doubt on their ideal of collaboration.

Several women discussed collaboration as an approach that was not normal for their institutional culture. Melissa, a dean, said, “I am very team-oriented and women tend to be.... That is not what the former dean did. He was a man. That’s not a characteristic that most of our male deans have.... That was really absent in my college.” Melissa took a gendered stance on collaboration. She went on to say, “I think my college needed a woman’s touch.” Nancy’s story illustrates this tension between gender and

leadership style well. As the first women dean at her institution, Nancy was met with some resistance as a collaborative leader. “That’s the sort of leadership that the school really, really needed at this time, so that makes a difference. They’ve never had a collaborative leader before. They’ve had commanders.” Nancy explained that the faculty were unsure how to respond to her style of leadership. “That’s caused part of the hub-bub, you know, early on with people.” Nancy sought to create systems for “listening to each other.” She hoped to develop a strategic plan after hearing from the faculty. “We all need to have some buy-in so we will want to do it. We’re now well into the strategic planning process and things are much better than they were a year ago.” Nancy explained, “People are getting used to my leadership style and what it means to have a collaborative leader. I can still be directive when needed, but most of the time they don’t need somebody with an iron fist.”

In summary, over half of women viewed themselves as inherently collaborative leaders. As Kimberly, a vice president, said, “I am going to be a team player, and smile, and be collaborative in everything I do. That’s part of my DNA, professionally.” For most women, collaboration was a defining tenet in their leadership style.

Climate

University climate affected whether women felt accepted or not accepted. This dimension of culture includes gender discrimination and bias and underlying cultural assumptions. Beverly said, “I wish I would have known how important culture is in higher education.” Women’s experience of institutional culture was also the determining factor for institutional fit—whether a woman felt like they aligned with the culture.

Accepting

Virtually all women in this study claimed that their current institutional climate was accepting. Perhaps, that's not surprising since they all chose to continue employment there. When directly asked if their institutional climate was accepting of women, the participants unanimously expressed gratefulness for the support of their institutions. However, in more indirect ways, women shared about the times they had not been accepted either at other institutions or by individuals (thus not their current institution was accepting).

First, women recognized the women who were their organizational superiors or women who had served in leadership at the institution. Usually this came in the form of listing all the women that came to mind, but Ann shared an overarching view of the longstanding history of women in leadership at her institution, "There had been women on the senior leadership cabinet for 25 years. It wasn't an issue of whether women could serve, even in leadership organizational structures." When participants talked about the institution being accepting, typically they used words like "majority," "most," "in general," or "overall" to explain that not absolutely everyone was accepting. Kimberly shared, "I think overall it has been good. I have definitely noticed that as I have assumed positions of greater responsibility that there are less women around me." Although almost all the participants expressed that the institution was accepting, there was an admission by some women that not all individuals at the institution were equally accepting. "It's not really a question, in my experience, of whether an institution is or isn't welcoming. In this era, I think institutions are welcoming and have to be welcoming, and that's been true for a long time." Kayla explained, from her experience

as a vice president, institutions can be accepting even if individuals are not. “I think as institutions they were all accepting. The problem arises with individuals, not with institutions. At least that’s been my experience.” More will be explored in the section on the aspects of institutional culture that did not feeling accepting to women.

Second, women found support and felt that they had good fortune at their institutions. Diana, the first woman in her vice president position, said, “There’s some glass ceilings out there. I’m lucky, I haven’t experienced that as much as I’ve talked to other colleagues who have.” As the first woman president at her institution, Julia explained that she has been “very well received.” She acknowledged that people may not have accepted her, but she expressed gratitude that they had not encountered resistance due to her gender. “While there may be those that did not feel that way, they didn’t express it to me. ... There’s never been anyone that has let me know that they were displeased with my stepping in as a female. So, I’ve just really been thankful.” Many women felt their institution had an extremely supportive environment. Destiny explained, “There’s discrimination everywhere but this is not an institution that’s known for discriminating. It’s a very welcoming and wonderful place to work. ... I’m not the only person sitting here who’s been here for almost 30 years. ... If people aren’t happy, they leave.” Similarly, Adrienne felt accepted and appreciated at her institution. “Some of the board members have said, ‘I hope we get another woman as president.’ ... They like that I am thorough, that I have learned the art of fundraising, and have helped, with a good leadership team, build a thriving enterprise here.” Thus, most women felt accepted and supported by their institution as a whole.

Third, a woman's positional level factored into her attention to her gender. The higher the level of responsibility the less the participant considered her gender at play. Alexis said, "I felt like my fellow deans respected me. ... I never felt like folks at that level ever didn't, but you certainly could tell that that university had evolved out of a culture that ... didn't sort of expect women to be in those roles." Women presidents, as Alexis would become, did not find bias to be absent, yet their positional power both silenced some bias and amplified other bias. Gail, a university president, said, "Now I do have positional power and I can show more sides of myself." A small group of women noted that their institutions were accepting of women up to a certain "level," which all of them defined as the dean level. Karen explained, "I think it is accepting of women as deans. ... I think in that second tier, it's perfectly fine." Senior leadership was seemingly, according to participants, still reserved for males at these institutions.

Not Accepting

Some aspects of the institutional culture were not accepting to women. Participants described past institutions that were not accepting even when women may have been leading there. Diana explained a university where she had worked that was "not accepting at all. Even though, ironically, they have a female provost now. ... In general, women have a fairly difficult time there." She went on to describe the provost, "I don't know how to say this in a politically nice way – she's the male-est female I've ever met. I think she probably models her behavior after a typical model of what I think more of a male leadership style would look like." Although many institutions espouse diversity in leadership, Kayla believed, "It's still the case, certainly at our university, that most of the administrators are men. There is an effort, at least on paper, to hire more

women into these positions. It doesn't necessarily happen." Women described the culture as not accepting of them because of bias, which includes first-generation gender bias, second-generation gender bias, and women-to-women bias.

First-generation gender bias. About half of women had experienced first-generation gender bias at some point in their career. For most women, more blatant discrimination has decreased over the course of their career—both because of their age and position as well as a cultural awareness. Faith, a provost, explained, "It was much worse 30 years ago. I would say 30 years ago the expectations ... I didn't have to feel it, they would be stated. ... It was overt. I'd say in 2018 it's rare and it's much better." Gail said that in the 1980s and 1990s, "Men felt very comfortable putting their hands on you. I mean, touching your back, stroking your arm. ... They'd say, 'You have beautiful hair.' I'd feel like saying, 'Well, shall we talk about your looks?'" Overcoming the comments about appearance seemed par for the course as participants sought to advance. Many women shared inappropriate comments that men had made in their presence about other women or about them, but as Kayla said about the culture, "there was no consciousness of it."

Women also faced bias in hiring processes or as a new hire into administration. As a business school dean, Cathy was well accustomed to working with men since business is still a male-dominated field. During a job interview, the president asked her, "Well, you're a woman. Do you think you can manage men?" Expressing her shock and not recommending her response, Cathy said, "Without thinking, my response was, 'You haven't even looked at my CV, have you? And if you had, you wouldn't have asked me that question.'" Cathy was appalled at the direct bias. As Madison began a new position

as a business school dean, she was chastised for having a family. An older man said to her, “So I see you brought a lot of baggage with you.” At first, Madison was confused, so the man explained, “Yeah, I see you have a husband and three kids.” Madison assertively responded, “Oh, you think that’s baggage? I’ll just tell you, those people are much more important to me than this job. I’m sorry you see them as baggage.” Because the man himself had several children, Madison concluded, “He was a chauvinist. He didn’t think a woman should be in the dean’s office, certainly not a business dean’s office. He was going to be a jerk.” Many women replied to bias assertively, like Cathy and Madison.

Many participants encountered men who made what several participants called “stupid comments.” These ranged from broad statements about women to individual comments made directly to a participant. Kiara shared a story from a campus-wide meeting when her institution was in the process of hiring a new chancellor. A faculty member commented to the panel, “I’ll never work for a woman chancellor.” Kiara recounted his boldness to make that statement in front of the entire campus, which reflected a sentiment that still existed among some on her campus. Diana shared about “overt sexism” from a junior faculty member who she disagreed with in a meeting, “He stomped into my office after the meeting and he said, ‘I just wish all you women would go home and have your babies and leave us alone.’” Directed at her personal life, Cathy said, “I’ve had people say to me stupid things, like, ‘I’m surprised you’re a good mother.’ What does that mean? Because I have a good job, I can’t be a good mother?” Cathy explained that people have stereotypes “in their head about what your life must be like when you’re in these kinds of roles.” Some women mentioned using humor or simply

ignoring direct discrimination. Karen had an older male faculty member say to her, “I didn’t think a woman could do the dean’s job.” Karen explained, “He’s surprised that I have been able to do it. Pleasantly surprised but surprised nonetheless. For him, telling me that, is a compliment as opposed to an insult, which is how I think some people might take it.” Although the bias was blatant, many participants shared situations where they gave a gentle or humorous response.

Despite emitting positivity and confidence, women shared enormous impediments to their advancement that they had encountered. First, religious institutions were oppressive for some, but not all, women who worked in them. “Opportunities were tremendous. The obstacles were tremendous,” Mary said. Unique to her work in theological education, Mary explained how people would try to use bible passages to suggest that since she was a woman she should not be allowed to lead or speak. “Everything from someone saying to me, after making a public presentation, that I was a daughter of Satan to how could I stand up in front of men and women and try to speak.” There are “types of theology that will accept women, types of theology that will not accept women leaders.” Mary pressed up against some who were shamelessly, religiously opposed to women in leadership. Working in theological education as a woman, Adrienne also experienced religious stigma. “I had some young men take my courses in order to see if they could just dispute my credibility to teach or to have authority over them in the way that an educator does, over his or her students.” Several women expressed that working in religiously-affiliated institutions was especially difficult to overcome traditional notions of gender roles.

Second, a few women had been involved in sexual harassment scandals; some even participated in lawsuits. Melissa described an especially complex situation of sexual harassment with a peer in administration. “He started sending over 200 texts and photos every day. It was awful. ... I tried to tell people at work and was told not to by our general council, that it would follow me forever. So, I just lived with it.” Because they regularly worked together, Melissa developed strategies. “I just started to create gatekeepers and I stopped taking his calls. I stopped texts. I would only respond to emails that were work related.” Melissa gave her secretary restrictions on setting up meetings with him. “We don’t ever have a meeting that isn’t between the hours of 10:00 and 3:00. I will never meet him off campus. ... It will be a public location. These are the only places I will meet him.” Melissa felt like she was living two lives. “I have to act like at work like nothing is wrong. I also have to keep my distance because if he thinks everything is okay, he’ll keep doing it. ... It was a big part of my consciousness every day.” For Melissa, the institution did not offer much support, so she had to create scenarios that protected her “from getting into a situation where [she] couldn’t change an outcome.” After over a year of this harassment, Melissa reported that “he moved on to somebody else, I believe.” Because the system did not want to take action against this prominent male figure and Melissa did not want her career to be marked by sexual harassment, the man was never reprimanded or stopped. “It was arguably the hardest thing that I’ve ever experienced, because of ... the violation of trust.” Melissa represents the few women in this study who suffered egregious sexual harassment but endured and excelled beyond it.

Bullying. Several women mentioned experiences where they had been bullied. Some of the stories included blatant bias directed specifically at women while other participants experienced more subtle gender bias that may fit more appropriately under second generation gender bias. However, all instances of bullying were included in this section for ease. These stories are the most difficult to share while protecting the identities of participants. Although certain facts have been left out, the stories illustrate the challenging situations about a fifth of participants faced. Diana explained, "I've been bullied by men ... who think that they can just kind of shove their opinion on you and they would never speak to a man that way." Diana shared an example:

A few years ago, I was on a committee. ... A male colleague on the committee and I were disagreeing. ... I really thought it was fine. I thought, "Here's two colleagues, we're having a disagreement," it was, I thought, very professional, and collegial. Then after the meeting, he pulls me aside and was like, "You shouldn't have spoken to me like that during the meeting." I'm like, "What do you mean? I was just trying to argue and make my point. ... I don't understand what your problem was." He said, "Well, it's just not your place to question me in the meeting."

We're colleagues. I mean, it's not like I was a junior professor and he was a ... I actually was higher ranked than him at the time. I mean, so it wasn't like a professional, "I'm your boss," or someone who's more senior than you, it was actually like, he was just personally saying, "You shouldn't question me like that in a meeting." I immediately started to realize ... I said, "Well, what about this other colleague? ... [He] was making the same argument that I was." He was like, "Well, [he] was appropriate, but you were not." I actually started to laugh, because I was like, "Okay, well, you know, I'm sorry if I offended you, but we're going to have to agree to disagree here, because I think you're ridiculous." I walked away.

I mean, it was clearly a case of that guy was a chauvinist bully. I mean, to even say it's okay for [a male colleague] to do it, but it's not okay for you to call me out in a meeting, was just the most ridiculous thing I ever heard. You can kind of laugh at those situations, but they really do kind of chip away at you.

Debra felt passed over for promotions and she believed it was due to her gender. “I’ve always felt like my supervisors are like, ‘Oh my gosh, she’s knocking it out of the park, ... but we probably don’t want to let a lot of other people to see that, because that might make me look not quite as bright.’” Supervisors who felt “threatened,” according to participants, were harder on women. “I used to be part of some important leadership councils at the university, and my boss, because he’s threatened by me, went ... to take [me] off of these councils, without consulting with me.” For the purposes of this study, this behavior is referred to as bullying. “I think it’s just evil, honestly. I’m saying this because I’ve had a lot of hurt over it ... but I still want to speak the truth that it was a manipulative action that he took to kind of give me less opportunity.” Debra was not the only participant who experienced bullying that happened “more often with women leaders.” Other women shared similar situations where intentional steps were taken to seemingly keep a woman from being noticed or advancing.

The most grievous instances are those that included direct bias. One woman, who will remain nameless for this example, shared her experience with “two people ... they’re both bullies; and both senior white males with a lot of power.” Her experience included being “attacked” in public meetings repeatedly. “He said I was stupid and a bad leader ... just attacked me viciously. ... He has done that in the past before I ever got here. He did that to other female colleagues and people of color. He always got away with it.” She said, “He saves that behavior for women. He doesn’t do that to the male faculty.” In alignment with university protocol, she sought support from general counsel and from superiors, and tried to work carefully through the situation.

He refused to meet with me and over the next couple of months he put a whole bunch of stuff on the internet slandering me. It went global. Literally, around the

world. I've traveled around the world ... and everywhere I've gone people have asked about this. ... He was spinning it as me shutting down academic freedom when in fact I was shutting down personal attacks on people.

... It cost us some enrollment and some donors, and I got so much hate mail. ... I also got hate mail from crazy people. Like calling me foul sexual names and just saying horrible things about me. I just had to soldier through that. I worked with the university to make sure I didn't say or do or write anything that could get me in trouble or get the school in trouble and we got through it. It was really hard. That's the worst experience I've had in my professional life of being attacked by a sexist bully on an international stage.

For this woman, the bullying was not isolated to one arena but it consumed her work, affecting all that she did. This experience made her question herself at times. "I don't even know what to do next. I don't know who I can talk to, because they don't know either. A couple things I did that they said to do, just made matters worse. There were times where I just felt completely flummoxed." Experiences of being bullied were stifling to women. There were not easy ways to combat the bully—these situations were extremely complex.

Second-generation gender bias. In more subtle ways, women experienced covert bias or second-generation gender bias. Kelly shared how some discrimination can be hard to identify. "It can be so subtly buried that to try and point it out, when people are doing it, becomes an exercise of frustration. I tend to think that's people being people." Many participants agreed that smaller injustices are chocked up to feelings rather than clearly gender bias. Kiara explained, "Something as simple as when you break for lunch, and you're at a meeting...you have to include yourself, because [the men] will not include you, or invite you." Again, this was not a phenomenon that could be proved, but Kiara had experienced it enough times to feel certain that gender was the culprit. Some

of the ways covert bias appeared was men's disregard for women (like Kiara described), surprise at women in leadership, and resistance in advancement.

Women experienced men ignoring their presence or disregarding their input. Faith referred to the "conventional challenge of being heard and being taken seriously as a thinker." When Faith was a graduate student, she remembered times that she would raise her hand and nobody would call on her in class. "It was pretty standard stuff. You had to be five times better than anybody else. You had to be absolutely, unequivocally, consistently the most outstanding person ever—just to get the same level of attention as some mediocre male. That's the truth." Unfortunately, this behavior was not constrained to graduate school. Several women spoke about similar experiences in meetings in administration—only this time, they were clearly equals. Faith shared an example with senior level administrators sitting around the table. "I would have the experience of saying, 'You know, the sky is blue,' and nothing happens. Then the guy next to me says, 'The sky is blue,' and it's like the most amazing comment on the planet." Although this was a common experience expressed by about a quarter of participants, only a few women talked about using strategy to overcome it.

Women worked with other women to shift the status quo. Gail had explained a similar situation as Faith, but in her case, Gail was in a room full of university presidents and provosts as one of only two women. Gail recounted saying things that would "fall flat." However, if a man suggested the same thing, people in the room supported it. "No, I'm not kidding you. It was not me making it up. People would say, 'How about if we do...'" And a man would say, "That's a great idea..." And it was like, "Did you see? I just said that." Before the next meeting, Gail pulled aside the other woman and a minority

man who had acknowledged her in a past meeting. They strategized about what would happen at the next meeting. Gail asked them if she was not communicating well or what they thought the problem was. “Well, you were being disregarded...because you’re a woman.” So, Gail asked her two colleagues, “Please speak up, please have your voice be heard and I will, then, say, ‘That’s a great idea,’ Or, ‘Wow, that’s really good. Let’s follow up on that. Let’s take that further.’” The next time the group met, Gail explained, that her and her couple of colleagues used this strategy. “It started to shift some things. But that’s an example ... of women being dismissed. ... Years ago that happened all the time, but it’s still happening.” One other strategy was mentioned by a couple of participants to combat ideas being disregarded as a woman. Trinity succinctly explained, “I often put lots of ideas into men’s heads. That, then it became their idea. And, I knew that, but it was okay because I was accomplishing what I wanted, bottom line.” Women who used this strategy had come to accept that credit was something they had to relinquish if they wanted to advance their ideas.

Many institutional cultures treated the presence of women in leadership as a surprise. Even if the surprise was celebratory, participants mentioned that this means women are still not considered to be a normal and accepted part of the culture. Although Debra said the culture is accepting, she went on to explain ways in which her institution still had room for improvement:

Accepting, I mean, it’s still ... kind of like radical when there is a woman at the podium at anything...which it’s like it shouldn’t be that way. You know? I mean, in other industries, they’ve managed to make more progress where it’s not as like, “Whoa!” Or at other universities, like, “Oh my gosh, it’s a woman, I expected to hear a male voice.” ... It’s tricky, because people want to be politically correct. So, it’s all very beneath the surface, anything that’s more repressive and less accepting is just very ... I mean, on the surface it’s ... I know a lot of males that will talk about how much they want women in leadership and

that sort of thing but then the actual actions that they take don't necessarily match up with that. I don't think anybody, or hardly anybody, would admit that they didn't accept, but I think it's still surprising and not the cultural norm.

Structures built for men and by men are unconsciously reinforced by the culture even after women have entered the system. Some women, like Sydney, viewed higher education as a "patriarchal hierarchal system" with a historically low involvement of women. Faith shared about her experience of learning the ropes as a woman provost in administration:

There weren't a whole lot of females in the room at any one time. So, again, that process of ... acculturating yourself. In order to succeed as an administrator in certain cultures, you have to dress a certain way. You have to speak a certain way. It's very ... As a colleague of mine puts it, "It's very hegemonistic masculine." But it's just ... It's not even hegemonistic masculine, it's hegemonistic heterosexual masculine.

Women felt that university structures were crafted to accommodate men, but also, women believed that institutional cultures favored men and reinforced the "patriarchal" system.

Women faced lingering discrimination, in the form of expectations that they would be the spouses rather than the employees. Participants shared stories of being invited to wives' events or women's clubs. Karen explained, "If I'm going to join a group, I don't want it to be faculty wives, where I'm going to do things while the men work, because I need to work." Although these were forgettable experiences that women struggled to recall because most had opted out of them, the impression the invitation left was that women faculty and administrators did not fit the mold; or more directly, women were expected to be in the supportive role not in the breadwinner role. "It was kind of in your face that, yeah, I'm a faculty member, but I'm different than most faculty members." Other women experienced their difference in meetings with all or mostly men. Men would often delegate tasks based on gender. Michelle shared about a meeting

where a man told her to take the minutes. “I remember at that point thinking, ‘They’re trying to pigeon hole me as a woman doing the secretarial kinds of things.’ I said, ‘Okay, I’m happy to take the minutes. Next time it’s your turn.’ That kind of set the tone.” Women found being direct or using humor helped. After employing these type of strategies, several participants said that the “sexist behavior” stopped because they were not “playing ball.” Michelle even reported that her strategies helped her be accepted as “one of the guys.”

Another lingering piece of bias emerged with physical appearance; women received regular comments on their attire or their attractiveness. Michelle explained, “Every single day I talk about my age, my clothing, or my gender in a way that I’m not sure that someone who was male would talk about their age, gender, or clothing.” Margaret took a comedic approach, “Older men will tend to say, ‘You’re the prettiest president we ever had.’ Or, ‘You’re the prettiest provost we ever had.’ I used to joke and say, ‘Actually, [the previous provost] would be offended by that. He thinks he’s the prettiest provost we ever had.’” Women found ways to brush off possible offenses and pointed bias. Humor was frequently mentioned as a tool for responding to awkward or surprising gender discrimination.

Women felt residual gender bias when trying to advance into more senior positions. “The next step for me is to become a university president. That’s my next aspiration. I do now feel that being a woman is a limiting factor,” Jasmine shared about feeling like she was hitting the glass ceiling. “That last level, that last crack of the glass ceiling, I think, is a little more challenging than anything I’ve ever experienced prior to that ... on the whole I don’t feel like it’s been much of a limiting factor.” Additionally,

women encountered some men who did not want to be led by a woman, but the evidence was subtle rather than blatant. Sydney, a provost, shared her story of coming into a position where faculty members needed greater accountability. “Some faculty, particularly the men, have really bristled at, first of all, the fact that they’re supervised, and secondly, kind of bristled at the fact that it’s a woman whose kind of putting these standards into place.” Other women talked about recognition men received that women did not receive for the same accomplishments or assumptions that had to be righted.

Women mentioned situations when they had been cautioned not to be too ambitious. After a board member had pointed out her potential for a presidency, Beverly shared a story of meeting with the president at her institution who was her immediate boss at the time. “He danced around the topic of being a minority president and then being female, but basically, his overall message was condescending and indicating that I was in the best role for me.” Beverly shared, “When you ask me if I was looking to be a president, I can’t say that that moment did not discourage me, but then I looked at the numbers of female presidents. ...Then determined that that road might be difficult for me.” Although Beverly’s president had minimized her goal and aspiration, she decided to pursue a presidency. At the time of the interview, Beverly was in her second presidency.

Thus, from the perspective of the participants, gender bias still exists. Even so, participants were hopeful, not discouraged, about the future for women. “On one hand it can be a bit disconcerting and discouraging that in 2018 there are still these views held by some,” Betty said about second-generation gender bias. “But, at the same time, it also increases my resolve that there’s important work to be done here. How do you make

progress if you're not willing to accept that challenge and try to move things forward?" Several women had suggestions for moving forward. Alexis posed the challenge that "underrepresented people get together and talk to each other about how to fix the problems," yet they lack power as a group. Alexis suggested, "You also have to have people from the power groups, which is oftentimes white males, in those conversations. You have to have those folks be champions as well, or you're not ever going to break down the barriers and move more people through the system."

Women to women. An interesting and unexpected finding among about a quarter of participants was difficulty working with other women. Anna stated, "When women are honest, they're not so excited when other women are successful and being promoted...when it's not them." The literature confirms that women are more competitive with other women than with men—rather than seeing a win for one woman as a win for all women. Carolyn's experience confirms the research, "Women are also often the focus from other women as being too hard on each other.... If women criticize ... they're unable to work with other women. If men provide feedback, well that's just normal."

A few women had negative experiences with women superiors. Kayla, who had returned to the professoriate after having been at the vice president level, recounted, "The boss that drove me out of administration was female, and she said all the right things about women as researchers, women as administrators, but she didn't behave that way." Kayla shared about her experience with a female boss:

For her, she might have felt [that I was competition], because I also was a competitor for her job. ... I don't really know what she felt, to be honest. It's hard to know, because she wasn't being open to begin with. I don't really know

what she really felt about it. I certainly felt that she was feeling me, perceiving me as a competitor, and I was doing my best to be supportive to her because that was my job. Okay, you know, I didn't get the job, whatever. ... I wasn't trying to impede her in any way, I was trying to help her. She came from a different university, and it was very obvious that she didn't really understand the ethos here for a while.

Universities can have their policies, but the way that people behave is the way the people behave. You can't legislate that. Even if an institution kind of officially embraces women in certain positions, it can still subtly support a kind of sexism when it comes to certain decisions that are being made. I think that people who are inclined to behave in a sexist way can tell whether or not they're going to be ostracized or in some way penalized for that – and often it doesn't happen.

In Kayla's case, she experienced a welcoming university but a female boss who was not accepting of females. Several participants talked about women who "liked being the only woman in the room." Lola had women superiors that seemed to detract from her ability to get promoted. "I never quite got exactly what their problem was. ... I think there are some women who ... had a tough time or they expect women to be as driven and not into their families as they are." A few other participants also mentioned times when it seemed that a woman was blocking her advancement. Sharon shared how she coped, "I took the blows and the punches, but I activated my women's network to alert people about her." She explained that she did not take any direct action, but her colleagues helped validate her experience.

Expectations

One question asked women to share if they ever felt like the expectations for men and women were different in their university work. Over half of participants conveyed differences they had experienced between expectations for women and men. Those who had experienced inequity typically expressed their beliefs with conviction. "Women, in general in leadership positions, do have a different set of expectations," Diana declared.

“I very often have to wear a velvet glove over an iron fist. I don’t think men have to do that as much. I actually think I have to do that. ... I have found I’m usually more successful.” Whether it was toning down their aggressiveness or increasing their directness, women faced judgment for both ends of the spectrum. Expectations were not always clear until they were violated.

Women talked about drawing lines to clarify expectations that may be inadvertently placed on them. “I don’t make coffee for people,” Gail said—a commitment several other women mentioned as well. “I’m conscious of this, I don’t wear my gender on my sleeve, but I know that I’m treated differently. When I do bring in banana bread or something, I’m positive that people respond differently to me than if a man had brought in banana bread.” Gail believed that nurturing tasks are expected of women, so women need to be intentional and careful when to exhibit those behaviors. In a similar way, Ann shared how she combats the expectations about women, “I don’t talk about my family, I don’t talk about my children, unless it comes out of a more established conversation. ... Men, can get away with a much broader latitude.” Both Gail and Ann suggest that gender affects what is viewed as acceptable in the workplace. Women delved into the areas where this is felt the most: attire, approach, and effort.

Attire

Women felt pressure with the expectations of their appearance. In her role as vice president, Ann believed that appearance matters more for women in the academy. “I think women do have to think about what their externals are. I wish that weren’t true. But you have to have an appearance of professionalism that is an essential, whereas men, they have a little bit more bandwidth in that regard.” As a dean, Cathy shared, “I am very

professional. I am very formal. I wear a suit, even on dress down days.” Participants, particularly those over the age of 51, were more likely to mention the importance for women to dress in prescriptive, professional attire. One of the younger participants, Melissa, who worked as a dean, had been given advice about how to dress as a woman in academia.

One of the associate provosts sat me down and talked about how I talk with my hands too much, my nails need to be shorter, I need to wear panty hose, I need to wear less lipstick. When I meet with certain people, I need to wear brown. ... I bought panty hose, and I tried to wear them every day and I had two very small children, I have two dogs, and by the time I made it from my bedroom to my car I usually wasted about \$50 dollars’ worth of panty hose, and it’s just not me.

So, at that moment, actually, rather than listening and internalizing their 1950s advice, I stopped. I started wearing my hair natural. It’s super curly and I had been straightening it and it looked like crap. Now I like it much better. ... I started wearing heels again. ... When I came into the dean’s office, I wear a dress or a skirt, which is my preference, almost every single day.

Instead of conceding to the guidelines she had been given, Melissa came to a point where she decided to be herself and face the consequences. However, the experience was difficult for her. Melissa said, “I wish somebody would have told me that it’s never okay for someone to ask you to sacrifice who you are. That who you are is who got the job.” She went on to say she wished someone had told her that “at no point, is it normal, is it customary, or is it right, for someone to sit you down and tell you that you can’t wear heels over two inches.”

Beyond simply what women deemed appropriate for dress, women mentioned that their attire was often a topic of conversation in ways that men’s attire would not have been. Michelle shared about “a prospective board member told me that he liked my blouse.” Michelle explained that “one of the other evaluators, a more senior man, sort of cornered me and came to my defense in a kind of fierce way that I deeply appreciated. ...

He apologized to me for that comment as an inappropriate comment.” For Michelle, this was important because she realized, “Those kind of comments about smile or appearance or gender are things in my whole career that have happened, and I just sort of learned to brush them aside.” Several women shared about moments of unsolicited comments on their attire in professional settings. Attire was one area in which women felt the standards differed in the culture.

Approach

Women believed there are different expectations surrounding women’s approaches to leadership and the associated behaviors. Betty described some of the expectations placed on women leaders, “I think there’s just a difference in the expectation of how they’ll feel in working with a president that’s a female, compared to a male. I think they expect it’s going to be a little bit more warmer and fuzzier.” Others expressed similar expectations for women to be genteel and nice. However, the expectations for women were not always positive ones. Anna said, “As a woman you’ve got to find that balance of where you can be the leader without being overly pushy. It doesn’t take much.” Many women shared experiences where they had towed the line or gone too far as a woman but felt a man would have not suffered the same repercussions. Anna explained, “I’m not really your woman leader advocate, but a man can say the same thing and everybody says ‘Yes, we’re going to follow that.’ A woman can say it and they’ll say, ‘She’s just a pushy b-word.’” Aggressive behavior was the most commonly referenced difference in expectation of leadership approach.

Many participants expressed a sense of being caught by an expectation no matter what approach they used. Women shared a myriad of “catch-22” dilemmas. Carolyn summarized several such conundrums:

In terms of the work load requirement, you know, I think if women talk about what they’ve accomplished it might be viewed more as a statement of, not bragging but certainly constantly focusing on their accomplishments versus being a team player. If they are a team player and put the team first, it’s often people then question what they got done. ... If men talk about things, it’s considered normal. If they talk about their accomplishments. And if they don’t, it’s perhaps inferred that they’re getting the work done. Is that a huge difference, I don’t know? But I think we still see some of those biases.

...If they’re viewed as being forthright and providing direct feedback, it’s considered confrontive versus their male counterparts who might be viewed as being insightful and thoughtful and direct. Women, may often be viewed as confrontive and combative. Sometimes I will take a little bit softer approach and kind of work my way around to the point, because if you’re too direct, it tends to be viewed as combative and difficult to work with.

Women expressed feeling like they were in lose-lose situations. Ultimately, many women chose to embrace their natural leadership style and deal with any negative feedback. Cathy gave the example of firing an employee within the first few weeks of her job because “it was what needed to be done.” However, people were surprised by Cathy’s boldness, she shared, “When you’re a woman, I think, there is this assumption that you’re not going to behave that way. ... If you’re in a role that’s counter to the perception of what a woman might be like, it makes it a little tougher.”

Expectations are even greater on women who are also racial minorities. Gloria, a dean, expressed, “I would say that almost everything I say about this is colored, and I mean that very intentionally, by race.” Gloria went on to give an example of how she resists expectations placed on her, “I don’t keep tissue in my office, because several black women who are deans and presidents said to me, ‘White women will come into your

office to cry. They will expect you to take care of them and not hold them accountable.” Although Gloria is not sure if this is true, she decided, “Okay, I won’t keep tissues in my office.” Gloria did believe that there are different expectations for women. “I think the expectation that women will take care of people’s emotions, and not hold them accountable to the work that they have to do, is real.” Although not a racial minority, Michelle felt the difference of vulnerability from others at all levels. “I think that there are things students and staff will share with me that I don’t know they would share with every man.” More specifically, Michelle explained, “I don’t know that my staff person who a couple of times has just broken into tears in my office out of stress, if that would have happened with a male supervisor.” Women felt they were expected to manage the emotional burdens of colleagues on top of the professional work.

Effort

“There’s the old adage, ‘Women have to do twice as much, three times as well...to get the same credit,’ Sydney shared. A handful of participants referred to this maxim as a reflection of their own experience. Gail quoted a variation of this saying and said that it made her pause, “I would have thought that we would have been further along than what we are. We’ve made progress, but we are not there yet. We’re not there yet. We’ve made progress, no question about that.” Even with the progress, women talked about still having to work harder than men to achieve the same goal because the expectations differed. Carolyn shared, “I do believe that women are typically expected to do more. ... I do think there’s still some gender bias in terms of interactions in the work place.” Additional effort required women to prepare well and earn trust.

Women believed working harder meant preparing extensively. “I think you have to work harder to show your credentials and be prepared as a woman,” Joyce explained. From her experience in meetings, Joyce found that unpreparedness by a man would be perceived as him being a typical academic while, for a woman, unpreparedness for a meeting may create doubt about her job title. Joyce said, “I think a woman has to perform in every way. ... Every time I do anything I need to have my A-game. I need to be prepared. ... I feel like the penalty would be higher for me.” Rebecca, a vice president, found awareness and preparation to be essential when it came to tenure standards. Confronting her faculty advocate, Rebecca said, “We went to my office and I asked her if I needed to be concerned that the standards would be different for me when I applied not only for contract renewal but for tenure and promotion. She looked at me with a straight face and said, she wished she could say otherwise, but that yes, they would be different.” Rebecca said she was not only “intimately familiar with the formal criteria,” but she also was “astute enough to understand the informal culture” of her institution. Out of her own experience, Rebecca cautioned others to be “attentive to how those policies are applied because there is still a level of subjectivity that allows an institution to operate within the parameters of the law.”

Women experienced that men had more leeway and were trusted when women felt they had to earn trust. Kiara believed strongly that expectations are different for men. “All the time. Every day. I have worked alongside men who, if you were to loosely phrase it, ‘get away with murder.’” The different standard is evidenced by the consequences, Kiara explained, “I’ve seen gentlemen get a pass and you know, they’ll get a written warning. The penalty for a woman would be much harsher.” Similarly, in

hiring, sometimes men were given “the benefit of the doubt of future productivity” over women, Margaret explained from her experience in working with department hiring processes as a provost. “You could have a man and a woman with essentially the same CV, the same number of publications, and the presumption that the man would continue to be productive but uncertainty about the woman.” Margaret shared that a vice provost would challenge those departments and find that “they didn’t even realize they were doing it.” Several participants mentioned encountering the presumption about women that they would be less productive because of having children. Some women felt it was not sheer effort but credibility that was their hurdle. Sydney explained:

I wouldn’t say that I felt like I had to do more. I did feel like, at times, I had to work harder to establish my credibility than my male colleagues did. ... I have recognized that some of what it takes to be taken seriously, as a woman, doing the same kind of work, is different and requires a different kind of patience and forbearance than it does for my white male colleagues.

Some women, like Sydney, accepted that there would be differences but worked to understand the anomalies and work within the system. Other women fought against the system in hopes of reforming it.

Equity in Expectations

Some women experienced expectations for all employees to meet the same standards. About a quarter of participants believed professional expectations are equal for men and women, or they could not “put my finger on” any differences. Destiny believes that “academia is pretty cut throat” to men and women alike. Most women in this category had little to say except, like Lola, who said, “I don’t think there’s a difference in if a man were in this position. I don’t think there’s different expectations.” A few women referenced their field of study as having equalized the expectations for

them. Tina, a dean, explained, “My first job was [in a field] where I competed with men daily. ... In fact, pretty much every field I’ve ever been in it was male dominated.”

Primarily women with business or law backgrounds believed that decisions were made “based on who had the abilities to do things,” as Margaret asserted.

A few participants had experienced equal treatment of men and women, yet believed that was not the goal. Cynthia shared, “Everybody was sort of treated equal, whether you had equal needs or not. I don’t think men and women have equal needs, professionally as academics. Women have children or all of those things. I mean, they impact them very differently from men.” At her current institution where she serves as president, Cynthia seeks to meet the special needs of women—providing lactation rooms and other “things that are more specific to women.” Advocating for women to be treated differently than men was a caveat to the discussion about expectations.

CHAPTER SIX

Findings: Nurture

Do women academic leaders describe an experience of sponsorship? If so, how?

Nurture emerged as the most variable of the three strands. Although structural and cultural factors had to align for women, nurture was the difference maker for women to move into senior leadership positions. However, nurture included various influences from childhood, mentors, sponsors, networks, as well as personal faith, personal health, self-doubt, and a desire to lead. Although wide-ranging in scope, these influences are aspects of their leadership that have been cultivated and curated. In other words, these are fluctuating pieces of their journeys. Although not all leaders rise to leadership in the same way, there are predictable paths. Nurture is unpredictable and all-the-more influential. Among participants, patterned experiences of nurture included mentorship, networks, childhood, and self-doubt.

Mentorship

Mentorship was used by participants as an umbrella term to encompass all the different types of supportive relationships. The most common phrase used by participants when discussing mentors was some variation of “I wouldn’t be where I am if it were not for them.” There was a sense of good fortune or luck as playing a role in having been mentored. This sample of women is not representative of the overall statistics for percentages of women being mentored. Out of the 41 women interviewed, 39 women had been influenced by a mentor and 25 described having had a sponsor.

Most women in this study recognized that they received high-quality mentorship, which they believed to be a rarity for many women in higher education. Sydney, a provost, shares, “I’ve been very fortunate. I am really aware that when I talk to some of my friends at other schools. I’m so keenly aware that every moment, vocationally, there’s been someone to whom I could turn. I don’t for a second take that for granted.” Sydney went on to talk about the essential role of mentorship for women, which other participants echoed. “I think it is vital. I think it’s vital for any faculty member, but for women, especially women and underrepresented faculty members, it’s vitally important.” Most women seemed eager to take whatever mentorship was made available—granted they respected the mentor—and some women shared about seeking out mentors if they were not readily available.

Women in senior level administration sought mentors for different reasons, but as Nancy, a dean, succinctly put it, “at the most basic level, they help me not be alone.” Higher levels of leadership left women with fewer colleagues at their home institution with whom they can confide. Thus, loneliness was regularly mentioned as something women felt they had to proactively manage. Only a few women mentioned mentorship as a tool to combat isolation. Gloria, a dean, simply said, “None of this work is something you can do by yourself.” Mentors offered both wisdom and companionship. “Relationships are critical in everything,” Cynthia, a college president, said. “You don’t get anywhere without having people helping you along the way. Formal mentors or informal mentors, friendships, sounding boards—all of that support—people who cheer you on.” Overall, women found mentors to be essential.

Informal Mentors

About half of the participants made the clarification that their experience with mentorship had been informal. However, informal mentoring relationships may promote personal and career growth more than formalized relationships (Chao et al., 1992; Fagenson-Eland, 1997; Ibarra et al., 2010). Alexis, a president at a political institution, explained, “Much of the encouragement I got along the way from people in administration, and some of the opportunities I had were from people who I worked closely with, knew me well, and sort of put me forward for opportunities. I think in many ways that was probably more important to me than any sort of more formal mentoring.” Many of the women in this study placed a high value on informal mentorship—recognizing it as playing an even more influential role in their careers.

Participants also identified informal mentorship as an accompaniment to a relationship with a supervisor. Although bosses did not always act as mentors, those who did acted more informally according to women in this study. Diana, a vice president, describes a mentor in her first role in administration, “our mentors don’t always have to be your boss. But, he was wonderful. I mean, he was sort of an informal, but traditional, kind of mentor in that he taught me how to kind of be an administrator.” The way that Diana describes the mentorship relationship is that she received technical skills for administration. However, she did not go on to describe him as advocate or sponsor. Margaret, a college president, described a different informal experience with superiors who taught her things without recognizing the relationship as mentoring her.

I actually don’t even think they realized what they were doing. It wasn’t an intentional, “I’m going to mentor [Margaret].” It’s just we engaged in conversations about the work they did, how did it affect the work that I do. I’ve always been really interested in how organizations work.

Margaret's example illustrates that framing is as important as the action itself. Out of her confident and positive perspective, Margaret chose to label her interactions with these superiors as informal mentorship, but she could have easily thought of this experience as absent of mentors. Similarly, Sharon, a college president, calls these informal mentors her "secret mentors." "They were wonderful friends to me and mentored me informally. Without knowing it, they were my secret mentors, because I noticed the way they led and the way they thought."

Informal mentorship was also described in relationships that ebbed and flowed over a long period of time. Gail, a college president, shared about a mentor, "I would talk to her a lot about issues. She saw me as a direct colleague. We saw each other as colleagues. We're good friends. She's retired. I still talk to her. But, she was a dear mentor in lots of ways." Rather than the local relationship, which may include formal reporting lines, this type of relationship is more casual and stands the test of time. Additionally, these long distance and long-term contacts allowed women to converse with colleagues who were familiar with the challenges of their role, which was not easy for them to find at their home institutions. Gloria shared a strategy to find informal mentors.

The first thing I did when I was trying to decide about doing the interim deanship was think of who I knew were deans, or had been deans, who I really respected because I saw them as creatives in their work, and not just pencil pushers, or paper pushers. That was important to me, so I connected to those four people almost immediately. I asked them for permission to call them or text them if I needed to talk. All of them expressed permission. I already had their cell numbers, so, you know, once or twice a month I check in with one of those four people and I talk through things.

Gloria's experience was not the result of a formal mentorship program, and in many cases, these were peer mentors. However, the informal connections provided support for

Gloria as she navigated her role as dean. Karen, a dean, expressed informal peer mentorship as her primary support in her role as dean, “I’ve had a number of informal mentors. I have some peers that I think we kind of mentor each other. We work together really well. I’m not sure if mentor is the right word, but we certainly support each other.” Furthermore, this peer mentorship provided what many women called a sounding board, which will be discussed in the next section.

Mentor Types

The processor. One of the primary types of mentors is the Processor who acts as a confidant for a woman to share and process challenging situations or aspects of her work and as a conversation partner with whom a woman can brainstorm or bounce around ideas. Oftentimes, this type of mentor was even a peer. Kelly, a dean, put it this way:

It is wise, I found, to have friends who’ve been doing this a while that you can bounce things off of. I was lucky enough to have that, those kinds of mentors; who were happy to jump in and help me think through things and feel through things, and would tell me the truth.

The Processor, often referred to as a sounding board, affords the woman freedom to share about her situation—a liberty generally not granted in her position. Ann, a vice president, characterized a sounding board: “You just get a constellation of developmental friendships that serve to be good sounding boards and people who speak on your behalf.” Ann had experienced this first hand. “I’ve had a mixture of men and women throughout my career who just were generous and took the time to speak words of truth, be prayer partners, give a word of endorsement.” Cynthia explained that sounding boards are people who “you can bounce ideas and have their feedback” and that is “someone that

[you] can talk to and understand the position and whatnot, and be able to have a dialogue about that.” The Processor is also someone who can identify with the context and constraints of the role.

Rather than solutions, women expressed looking for a safe space to process an experience. Kimberly, a vice president, said, “It’s not counseling in that formal sense, but it’s like peer support, like you’re going to be okay.... I just need to tell the story and sometimes just by telling the story again you think about it in a different way.”

Participants found that the simple act of a listening mentor aided in the journey to a solution. However, this type of mentor is not restricted to listening but can reflect with the mentee and determine what the mentee needs from them. Processors helped women externally process the situation, empathized with her struggles, and, if needed, advised out of their own experiences.

Processors offered fresh perspective as Lydia, a college president, expressed: “I think mentors are really important because they often help you to see things about yourself that you might not otherwise see clearly or might for whatever reason maybe not be bold enough to see for yourself.” A new point of view helped women grow as Karen said about her mentor. “He really helped me work through decisions as opposed to just telling me what to do. That helped me grow a lot. It helped me start thinking about different perspectives and implications that I hadn’t considered to begin with.”

Processing implies a process, but for the complex challenges these senior leaders faced, they often lacked a protocol or process. Thus, women in this study found a partner to be helpful, if not essential, to thinking through their situations. Karen explained that her mentor did not solely offer solutions. “More than that, they’re somebody to listen to me,

and they help me see things for myself. I don't think a mentor really gives you the answer—a mentor helps you find the answer.” Mentors who processed situations joined the woman on her own journey and helped her cultivate her own leadership skills.

The encourager. Encouragers align with the traditional notion of a mentor, or the psychosocial mentor (Mullen, 1998). The psychosocial function of mentorship focuses on the relationship and the personal parts of the life of their mentee, but a psychosocial mentor falls short of providing professional and practical advice. Psychosocial support, which generally happens more naturally among women, focuses on self-confidence and professional identity—providing counseling, role modeling, and friendship (Kram, 1985; Noe, 1988). This type of mentor saw potential or capabilities in a participant and suggested she pursue a particular career path. Additionally, Encouragers provided emotional support as well as engendered confidence. A college president, Beverly said, “I've had a lot of good people who have come to bat to be references and they'll speak out on my behalf from experiences that I've had before and have encouraged me to always go to the next level and the next step.” Although Beverly mentions Encouragers within the academy who served as references for her, other women describe Encouragers as mentors outside of academia. Cynthia shared about her Encouragers, “They would highlight [my] strengths and give [me] the courage and you know, encourage [me], basically. So, there's so many different types of relationships and I think it's really important, actually, to have different people in the different roles.”

For several women, Encouragers came from their spiritual community. Nikki, a vice president, shared about her spiritual director who serves as a mentor. “Her support and encouragement and her help in helping me see through some of the fog sometimes

and sort out what's going on and how to call on what she knows are my strengths. That's been extremely helpful." The focus on reminding Nikki of her strengths qualifies her spiritual director as an Encourager. This is the one type of mentor that does not require knowledge of colleges and universities but rather knowledge of the woman. Julia, a college president, had a professional mentor and also a spiritual mentor. "I didn't realize at the time how much having both the professional and the spiritual side was beneficial.... But, I have realized later the difference in the mentorship they provided and how valuable both sides of that happened to be." The source of the encouragement could vary dramatically, but the need for encouragement was indispensable.

Several participants pointed out that the encouragement piece is especially important for women citing Sheryl Sandberg's book (2013). In *Lean In*, Sandberg describes an internal report out of Hewlett-Packard that discovered women thought they had to meet 100 percent of the conditions listed in order to apply for a job while men applied if they thought they met about 60 percent of the criteria (Sandberg, 2013). Although there are varying opinions on the reliability of that statistic, a handful of women in this study mention it because the findings resonated with their story. An Encourager would help a woman believe in herself enough to try for things that seemed just beyond their reach. Cathy, a dean, explained, "I needed someone like [my mentor] to encourage me to apply when I had like 70% or 80% of the boxes, but not the last 10 or 15 percent. She would say, 'Oh no, you're ready, go ahead and apply.' That was helpful."

Most of the accounts that were coded to this category are stories about a particular strength that someone pointed out to them. Gail gave an example about someone who had given her feedback:

She's been president three times. She said ... And I'll never forget this, 'cause it really helped me see myself differently. She said that I was the one person in her entire career who had balance of my head and my heart. My analytical and my people skills. I thought, wow, that is really good to know. That helped me understand the importance of the human skills, the people skills.

Lydia shared a story from working with board members earlier in her career.

It was really important to have that outside perspective of someone who said to me, "Hey, you handled that really well. You were able to communicate clearly with the board in a way that was not confrontational. You were really able to rally your colleagues and get them to debate something rationally. You were a good interface to the administration." So those were things that they pointed out, "Those are really important skills to have in an administrative role." So, they pointed that out to me, they encouraged me, they gave me that confidence.

Again, we see trusted others pinpointing particular strengths. For Lydia, those words of encouragement "gave [her the] confidence to step up to do some other things," including to become a university president later in her career. Encouragers can have a major impact whether the interactions with them are momentary or sustained over time.

The sponsor. The initial research question about nurture was to see if and how women academic leaders describe an experience of sponsorship. Ibarra et al.'s definition of sponsorship (2010) is "a special kind of relationship—called sponsorship—in which the mentor goes beyond giving feedback and advice and uses his or her influence with senior executives to advocate for the mentee." More than half of participants did describe a sponsor or advocate that was influential in their journey. Ann said: "I'm not here or where I was without mentors and sponsors." Ann went on to describe her sponsors as people who "got me on that leadership ladder. They spoke highly of me to different people. I mean, they just promoted me." However, the language of sponsorship was not always used. Participants in this study described sponsors as endorsers, advocates, and champions.

Endorser: A sponsor was characterized as someone who prepared the participant for a future role or career path, even her recommender—either verbal or written. Betty, a college president, is one of many women who mentioned a sponsor saying something like, “I think you’d be a good president some day.” But, the comment was not an isolated statement. Rather, the sponsor used their own influence to forge a path for the woman toward that end by providing professional development, “stretch” assignments, or additional responsibilities to nurture necessary skills. For example, Jasmine, a vice president, described an experience with a sponsor who told her: “All right, you need to be a university president. Here are the things I’m going to do to help you get ready.” Later in Jasmine’s career, this sponsor challenged her: “When are you going to move out from standing behind these men and find your own role?” This level of candor and assertiveness was common when women described a sponsor. Describing a sponsor, Anna, a former vice president, said, “He pushed me to do more than I thought I could.” This portrayal of sponsors as pushing or challenging was common. Jasmine described the difference as people who are going to be “brutally honest.” Jasmine said: “You need some mentors but you also need some champions. In my mind, champions are people who will tell you things that are tough, they will tell you hard truths, they will hold you accountable, and they will push you.” Sponsors created opportunities for women. Similarly, Kiara, a vice president, saw “the champion [as] the person who, behind closed doors, [who] is advocating for you to get and experience certain things that might not come your way without them advocating for you.”

Advocate: Advocacy took many forms. Participants described everything from sponsors helping them with cover letters to contributing funding for leadership institutes

to bending rules or breaking tradition to help them advance. Debra, a vice provost, said, “I would attribute the primary doors being opened to these two women that have just seen in me potential and told me that and talked about opportunities and promoted me and those kinds of things.” An advocate empowered her or offered her technical help like co-authoring a publication, appointing to a leadership role, or providing professional development. This was also a way that women gained self-efficacy. Alexis felt it was “important to have someone show that confidence” in her professional abilities. Similarly, Gail expressed, “The first person who invited me to be a dean and really his right arm. This man—he believed in me. He saw in me potential. He basically said to me, ‘I want you to be in this role. What do you need to be successful?’”

Champions: However, women were clear that these recommendations were not always original ideas in their own minds. Many of these women expressed ambition and desire to lead, but the role of the sponsor was to forge a way for the woman. Mary said, “[My sponsor] just opened a door. I knew the abilities were there, if I had the place to serve when they opened the door.” Even so, Rebecca recounts her first interaction with a man who became an influential sponsor for her. He invited her voice in a round table discussion at a conference, and that one encounter “led to a ten-year relationship that if I had to put a cost value on it I could not. Everything [he] said that he was going to do on my behalf in support of my research, he has done and done more than what he said he would do.” Sponsors were proactively involved in making a way for a woman to progress in her career. Pamela, the oldest participant in this study, highly regarded the role of sponsors in her career. “Considering that I did not have an advanced degree...basically anything that I have been able to do in education has been the result of

extraordinary people making it possible.” Pamela believed that her credentials alone were not enough to help her advance. “Because somebody simply looking at my resume would say, ‘She really doesn’t have adequate background for leadership in this field.’ If it hadn’t been for the confidence of these remarkable people, men and women, I wouldn’t have been able to do what I did.”

As may be expected, sponsors did not fit a mold. Sponsors were both males and females. Sponsors were from both formal and informal relationships. Sponsors were both short-term advocates and lifelong champions. Sponsors entered the picture both early on (even in graduate school) giving them a jumpstart and later in their careers giving them a needed boost to a senior level position. Sponsors emerged through both internal (people at their own institution) and external (people at other institutions) networks, as well as through professional guilds, leadership development programs, and conferences. Despite the different characteristics, the criteria for sponsorship was that the mentor exercised their influence in ways that shifted the trajectory or accelerated the pace of each woman’s career.

Mentorship and Institutional Types

Mentors served assorted functions from teaching advice to career path direction to practical, skill-based advice. And, mentors could be anyone from a boss to a peer to just a good person. There are interesting correlations across institutional types according to the different functions of mentorship. Figure 6.1 comparatively examines the non-exclusive experiences of sponsors, encouragers, and processors.

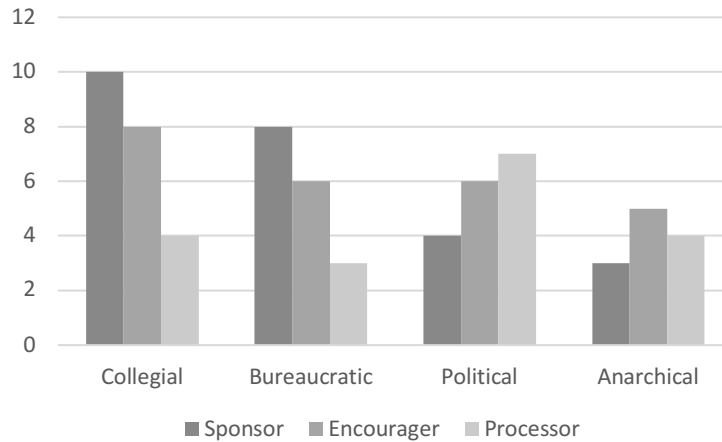


Figure 6.1. Sponsors, encouragers, and processors by institutional type. Number of participants that described each of these functions of mentorship.

First, a look at participants’ experiences with a sponsor show a higher percentage of participants at collegial and bureaucratic institutions. As the size of the institution increased, the likelihood of sponsorship decreased. Additionally, a larger percentage of women presidents (77%) and vice presidents (73%) in this study shared an experience of sponsorship than provosts (40%) and deans (36%). These findings confirm that sponsorship helps women advance to the highest levels of an organization (Ibarra et al., 2010). Additionally, although the literature suggests that women need formal mentors, most women described an informal mentorship experience (Ibarra et al., 2010). Informal mentorship occurred in all three functions of mentorship suggested in this study.

Second, encouragers were experienced by at least half of participants at each type. There was little variation across institutional type, which suggests that institutional culture does not influence this function of mentorship. However, women with at least 30 years of experience in higher education were more likely to describe an encourager. Beyond the fact that duration may have allowed for more time to encounter

encouragement in higher education, this may represent the growth of technical and intentional mentorship.

Third, women in collegial and bureaucratic institutions were less likely to have a processor mentor than women in political and anarchical institutions. Processors were most often mentioned by women at political institutions perhaps due to the competitive nature of those institutions. Birnbaum emphasized the constant conflict at political institutions, which suggests that women who had processors used them to think through ways to navigate the system.

In summary, institutional type shed some light on individual findings. Although a handful of women had participated in a formal mentorship program, most participants emphasized an informal quality to their mentorship experiences.

Lack of Support

About a fifth of my participants expressed that they lacked professional support at some point in their careers. When the participants explained the deficit they felt, it was often connected to them being the only person in their position at their institution and feeling isolated. For this group, it was less about a need for mentorship and more about a need for peer support/empathy. However, they ultimately found support externally with peers at other institutions. “I am the only one in the building who does this job—only one of us straddles this faculty administrative role,” Michelle, a vice president, explained. “This, for me, is part of why deans as colleagues at [similar] institutions have become such a valuable resource. Because they, in some ways, are the only other people who understand what this particular role is like.”

Networks

Networking is another aspect of nurture that played a role in women's professional success. Where good mentorship is viewed as a result of fortune and not strategic behavior, good networking is viewed as a result of calculated actions. Because of this element of personal exertion and careful strategy, discussion of networking often came with an air of pride. Destiny shared about networking:

Well, it provides people who have an understanding and can give you advice, which you of course are free to take or ignore. It's just networking. I think networking is important to anybody's career... I think it's somewhat Pollyanna-ish to think that there are people out there who are just going to help you because they're kind people who want to help others. I think that what you see is people who want to help others because it also helps them with their careers. I think that's just fine.

Focusing on the value of networking, Destiny countered the notion of mentorship.

Destiny was one of two participants who did not identify a mentor, which she attributed to her independence. "I'm a pretty independent person. I think at some level within administration you have to be. You sort of have to know who you are and what you want to accomplish and then seek out the resources to do that." Destiny was a provost with two grown children, who had obviously set goals and achieved them. Networking was discussed in terms of internal networks to the institution and, more often, external networks related to disciplinary guilds or professional development. Also, networking was one of the most common strategies women mentioned as contributing to their professional success.

Internal institutional networking considerably overlapped with conversation about mentorship (or sponsorship), culture, and relationships (or building trust). A few women mentioned networking at their own institution. Upon her arrival at her institution,

Rebecca read her colleague's CVs that were posted on the website and reached out to a few of them individually to discuss their research. "I always think about ways in which I can also support my colleagues," Rebecca said. "Something as simple as remaining current with their research interests so that when I read an article that I think would be of interest to them, forwarding it to them so that it is not a one-sided relationship, but that you're actually cultivating mutual relationships." This value on relationships with colleagues illustrates that an internal network serves as a community of support. Kelly shared about the benefits of an internal network among the deans.

The deans here are a very collegial group, which is a godsend, frankly. When I have questions, I will often turn to a fellow dean whom I think may have dealt with something like this or has been here much longer than me and sort of knows there's the front story and the back story. Having peers at an institution that are collegial has been exceedingly important to me here, and has helped me get through the initial period of on-boarding as a new dean.

An internal network can help create trusted relationships. Though networking is a component of nurture, an internal network is intimately connected to the experienced culture of the institution.

External Networks

External networking primarily met women administrators' need for people outside of their institution who could understand their experiences. Sometimes was a mentor, but for many, they described peers, colleagues, or friends that could be called on for support. Adrienne, a college president, said, "I talked with just a few close friends about the challenge. I knew I couldn't talk throughout the [institution] about my fearfulness, because that wouldn't inspire confidence. It's the role of the leader to always radiate hope and provide a better story than the current story an institution is in."

Cultivating relationships with colleagues at other institutions (even different institutional types) supplied good conversation partners and kept isolation at bay. Cynthia gave an example when she was being recruited for a presidency. “I knew several other presidents, and so I called them and asked for their feedback. You know, just really kind of picked their brain, so to speak. I definitely have always reached out to people whom I knew in my network, either friends or supporters, or people in the positions that I felt could really guide me. That’s always been very, very helpful.” For Cynthia, these were not formal mentorship relationships, but rather, she viewed this network as providing informal support.

External networks gave women someone to call. Kimberly explained one friend in her network as “kind of my, you know, like when you need your lifelines, and you’re not sure what to do next, he’ll be my phone a friend to get advice.” Several participants talked of colleagues with whom they do not remain in regular contact but still hold a close relationship. Melissa said it this way, “I know in a minute if I need something I could call her. She’s awesome.” Some express only sporadic communication with this type of colleague while others have a more scheduled dimension to their relationship—quarterly check-ins or annual in-person meetings. Michelle shared about a female dean that she met during a leadership development program, “We, probably once a quarter, catch up on the phone and just chat. Chat about what’s going on, we will sometimes have, ‘This is happening in my situation, do you have any ideas,’ kind of conversations.”

Peer networks. Rather than expressing a sense of competition with their peers, women expressed that others with the same position offer the most empathy and can understand the challenges of their work. Emily, a dean, said, “The other thing that’s been

incredibly helpful for my resilience is other deans. I mean, it's incredible. If I walk into a room and there is another dean, it's like we can connect within five minutes we're commiserating, laughing, and going, 'Oh, it's okay.'" Especially other women, I will say that. There aren't many, well yeah, there are more than there used to be, but when you connect then you have an even more personal connection." Karen said, "I've got a handful of dean colleagues across the country that I would think of as peer mentors that have been really helpful." This sentiment was expressed over and over. Nancy, also a dean, calls it "just a wonderful commiseration" to talk with other deans and former deans. "There's a lot of commonality in our work and that's more like collegial support. In some cases, they've been through some experience and they have some nugget of wisdom for me." In this sense, finding others "like them" at other institutions helped combat a sense of loneliness within their institution. Kelly explained:

I have a lot of friends who have been or who are administrators currently at other institutions. And so, I quite simply pick up the phone or shoot an email or text or whatever and say, 'I've got an issue, can you help me?' Folks are very generous, if you don't ask them too often, to help you think through some things. So, that's more of an informal network.

Typically, participants described an external network as complementing a mentorship relationship, but for a few participants peers were more influential than mentors. Debra felt she lacked mentors, but she had experienced some helpful peers, even sponsors, through her external network. "I really do think highly of mentoring," Debra expressed. "But I do think that the people who are like the most competent leaders, that I would want to mentor me, like they wouldn't agree to mentor me if it were a formal thing, because they don't have enough time." Debra was one of the younger participants in the study and had encountered some resistance in her pursuit to rise to

higher levels of leadership. Although Debra's orientation toward mentorship differs from most others in the study, her positive view of networking aligns with many participants in the study. "Whereas somebody that I can meet at a conference and then follow up with a time or two, you know, we see things in similar ways and that they have my best interest in mind and know enough about me to give me advice."

Leadership programs. Leadership programs provide networking opportunities across geographical boundaries and institutional types. Relationships established through those programs provided valuable resources throughout the course of participants' careers. Some of the mentorship relationships described in the previous section were results of involvement in leadership programs. However, peer relationships developed as well. Nikki shared about an association of deans and presidents that has "been extremely valuable." Specifically, she said that "to be able to be in a group that has the same kinds of challenges and to share how are we finding our solutions and ways forward. And, how we help one another through very changing and challenging times." Karen explained that she regularly attends conferences for networking but also for the connections to colleagues. "They're also good just for staying in touch with people who are in the same position, because even though I have dean peers on campus, they don't have the same kinds of challenges that business deans do."

Participants used leadership programs to strengthen skills. As Cathy explained, "My strategy has always been, if I don't think I'm ready, what skill set do I need to shore up? It's not common for an Associate Dean to have ... experience with fundraising, but that's a really common thing to ask of the Dean." Diana agreed that leadership programs were important to her growth as a leader. "I tried to identify gap areas and then go to

conferences or engage in professional development opportunities to help me get better at those,” Diana said. Across the whole of the interviews, the ideas of learning, growth, and development arose frequently in the discussion. Julia said, “I think one of the things that’s been very important to career growth is to always have growth objectives.” Julia went on to explain some of her own areas of growth as staying current with “what’s happening in the world” and reading to keep up with the trends and challenges in higher education at large.

Finding friends and groups outside of higher education was also important for Julia, but her involvements ended up providing a great deal of support as well. Julia described that she likes to be connected “externally,” which includes serving on boards. “I think being on boards of other organizations helps me to contribute what I can to them being better, but I also learn.... I think professionally stepping outside of my world has helped me to grow.” For Julia, a college president at a collegial institution, this external connection goes beyond her professional network. Julia shared about a community group that she has met with regularly for years. “Having people around me that just love me for who I am, not because I’m president, but they just love me for who I am, has been a very vital thing.” Similarly, Madison, a vice president, believed that community involvement was important to her professional life indirectly. She said, “I also try and stay involved in my community and give back, and you know, it just feels good.” Not only did participants care about the community but the community cared for them in ways that were important to their success. Kiara shared that professional support for her has not always come from within the academy. “I have had people who weren’t in higher education give me the support that I assumed would come from someone in higher

education. I still got it, but it didn't come from someone in higher education." Many participants voiced the supportive role of their spouse and family, which will be covered in the Structure findings.

Women's groups. A third piece of network, which could be either internal or external to the institution, are women's groups. These groups of solely women meet for professional support—both informally and formally. Adrienne described a group of six women presidents that she has met with for the last five years. "We bring case studies out of our places of leadership. We designed it ourselves. We'll spend two and a half days, two times a year, on one another's campuses." This "informal peer counseling," as Adrienne termed it, is a way to seek wisdom from a network of women at the same level. Adrienne was not unique in this experience; other participants described similar informal peer groups that met annually, monthly, or even weekly, by phone, over lunch, and both on campus and off—there was quite a variety. Alexis described a monthly lunch group with the senior women leaders of the university. Nikki created a space for women to gather and reflect together monthly. Anna shared about a group of women presidents who meet periodically. Joyce talked about a small group of dean colleagues that she "can talk to behind closed doors about what's really going on." Julia meets with a group of ten women presidents annually at a conference. Karen attends a women's group about two to three times a year. Michelle meets annually with women CAOs before an administrative guild meeting. "It's pretty fantastic comradery," Michelle expressed. "I was surprised how different the vibe was when just the women were there." The connection among women without the presence of men gave participants a freedom they had not experienced in any other professional context.

Women's groups produced informal mentorship opportunities. Mary experienced this informal mentorship in a monthly, interdisciplinary dinner group that she started, which Mary said, "seem to me, to have been the best way, rather than be assigned someone, or have some kind of formal apparatus of mentorship. It was groups of women gathering together to talk about things that interested them in light of being a woman." The space that Mary created remained professional, yet the informality allowed for a new level of vulnerability and support. Because most of the women described their professional experiences in a male-dominated context, women's group were a shift from the norm. Kiara evidenced this through her experiences of being in male-dominated groups and offering support to other women.

When we see a woman in the room, we make sure that we exchange information. We serve as a resource, you know, 'If you need something, let me know. Don't forget about this. There's an easier way to do that.' The women amongst the group have been very supportive of one another.

Thus, women's groups facilitate informal mentorship.

However, other participants mentioned formal women's groups and leadership programs for women like the HERS institute, American Council on Education leadership programs, college and university association women leaders' groups, and discipline-specific women's groups. Diana touted the benefits of involvement in women-specific professional development: "I think hearing the experiences of other women have helped me, again, be a better female leader." Donna, a dean, shared her experience in a leadership development program. "It was in an environment and a place where you could really ask questions and discuss challenges. I think in part because it was all women in terms of the classes we had, it felt like a safer environment to ask questions." The makeup of women and men in the room changed the conversation—particularly for

women earlier in their profession. Kiara, a young mother and vice president, attended a leadership conference for women.

They talked about being daughter, mom, sister, chancellor, you know, they talked about all of that and how their male counterparts don't have to think about some of the things that they have to think about. I think that's very true because it is the playing field—it's largely dominated by Caucasian men.

For Kiara, hearing other successful women leaders express similar struggles (even beyond their duties at work) to her own gave her hope and renewed energy for her career.

Conversational openness among an all-women audience allowed a wide range of topics to be honestly discussed. Mary described her experience in a program on women in higher education leadership. The program covered topics from barriers for women into leadership, available supports, public speaking, handling crises, and even professional dress. Mary said the two-week summer program dealt with “all kinds of things that any leader, but particularly a woman leader, would face.” Mary found it helpful to interact with women who had advanced to more senior positions in higher education. “I saw women presidents. I had dinner with women presidents. I began to sit with women leaders on a day-to-day basis and talk about the challenges in a very patriarchal environment of stepping up to the plate to lead both men and women.” Not only did these experiences provide in-the-moment support, they also provided lasting friendships for many participants. Sharon talked about using her “women’s network” to help in a particular challenge she encountered. “I took the blows and the punches, but I activated my women’s network to alert people.... I felt the support of my women colleagues who could be confidential...and they could validate what I was experiencing.” Women’s groups proved to be a source of strength for as many as half of the participants in this study.

Childhood

Childhood was mentioned by about a quarter of participants, but the reasons for remark were varied. Responses can be separated generally into two notable groups: (1) influence of parents and (2) influence of childhood peers. Participants who had mothers who worked outside the home felt work came more naturally to them. Cathy said it this way: “My mother was a vice president of a bank, so it never occurred to me that I couldn’t be ... I couldn’t hold down a powerful job in a male-dominated industry. It just never occurred to me I couldn’t.” Although other women shared this sentiment, still others mentioned the influence of their parents as academics or administrators. Second, the influence of childhood peers usually arose when women were explaining why competing with men was normal to them. A few women mentioned brothers, cousins, peers, or friends with whom they had always competed as equals. And, still others referenced their formative years in a girl’s school or a women’s college as preparing them to think “basically, that women can do anything that they want to do,” as Destiny put it. In an environment where the leaders are comprised of all women, this shaped a few participants to see women as capable for any (and all) leadership positions.

A desire to lead emerged as akin to but different from the structural piece of administration anticipation. Although many participants did not expect to become academic administrators, they noted a desire to lead. Through their description of this desire, it became evident that this desire was cultivated or nurtured into being sometime before the path of academic administration was realized. Women either talk about finding themselves as the natural leader of the group or as being drawn to leadership because of innate “gifts” or developed skills. There are few similarities in how this desire

came to be, but nearly half of the participants describe this inclination to lead making it important to note.

Self-Doubt

Although a little over half of women recounted moments of self-doubt, it is still noteworthy that the other nearly half of participants did not. The dialectical tension between regular doubting and almost never doubting was surprising. In moments of self-doubt, one response was for women to activate their support systems—mentors, peers, family—who would remind them of their ability, identity, and capacity. Emily shared about dealing with a particularly challenging season of her work.

I certainly turn to family. I turn to loved ones. I turn to myself, you know, how do I support myself. Then I think the other thing I did is, this sounds strange, but the first time in my life and I kind of actually stepped back and said, “It’s not the end of the world.” I think I just had to disconnect more. I mean, mentally, physically, the whole thing. Because it was killing me, it was just draining.

A closer look at each of the two groups—regular doubters and almost never doubters—helps clarify the perspectives and strategies women in each group used.

Regular Doubters

Regular doubters were the most common. For women who regularly doubted themselves, doubt was “normal.” Many of these participants declared that “everybody has doubts.” Diana said, “I think we all have self-doubt, especially on a bad day, right?” Even in expressing doubt, she doubts herself—adding a questioning “right” to the end of her statement. However, Diana firmly expressed that “it’s a natural part of leadership that you worry about [if you are doing a good job].” Similarly, Kelly viewed self-doubt as important personal reflection.

I think anybody who, and I would like to count myself in this group, anybody who really cares about their job will wonder and do wonder, “Am I doing enough? Am I still the right person for the job?” Or even, “Am I the right person for the job?”

Reflection was highly valued by many participants and viewed as a strength rather than a weakness. When Mary was asked about self-doubt, she responded that she doubts herself “about every day.” But, she was quick to say, “I push away the doubts when I get up in the morning, because I know I’ve got to get out there and make it happen.” Even with this strategy to start the day with confidence, Mary admitted, “Probably when I get home, today, I think, ‘Did I make a good decision?’ ‘How could I have improved that? What did I say that wasn’t quite clear?’ ‘What decision did I make that wasn’t a good decision?’” For Mary, this is not necessarily a negative practice. “Whether it’s doubting or reviewing, I mean, I would probably, in a more positive way, say ‘When do you reflect on your actions,’ which is kind of doubting, I guess, because if you felt like it was all great you wouldn’t even reflect on them.” Participants wrestled with this idea of doubt during our interviews. As they processed aloud about doubt, they normalized it, justified it, explained it, or reframed it.

For some of the participants, doubt was an early career issue while for other participants doubt persisted. Sydney expressed, “I experienced early on...that you’re just waiting for the day when they’re going to figure out you don’t know what you’re talking about and that you don’t really have anything to say. You’re just staying an hour ahead. You know? If that, on most things.” Sydney realized that she was not alone in these feelings when she talked openly with seasoned colleagues, who were still “wrestling with confidence and capacity.” Sydney explained, “I do think I have the muscles for the work

that I do, and I do think I have the fortitude to do what I do. I think I have a constant awareness of the desire to do better. Self-doubt is inherently part of that.”

For Pamela, self-doubt persisted “every day, absolutely, every day—I think that’s a feature of the socialization of girls.” Her whole first year as a president, Pamela said, “I was terrified every day.” Though she grew accustomed to the role, doubt continued in some ways. “I don’t think it absolutely correlates with gender, but I do think we will often find that women are much more self-questioning than many men.” However, Pamela did not see this as a weakness of women, “I think it’s a positive. I think that leaders who ask about their own abilities are better leaders than those who don’t.” Again, many participants choose to reframe doubt as an asset rather than a liability.

Gail also attached self-doubt to gender in that women often discount themselves more than men. “Do other women feel this [self-doubt] at times? Of course. Do men? I doubt it. I think they act out in other ways, if they feel unprepared.” Gloria considered that it might be connected to gender, “I don’t know that it’s a particularly woman thing to feel imposter syndrome, but you know, I’m 59, I still struggle with imposter syndrome.” Gloria phrased it this way, “Really aware of my deficits, as much as I am aware of my strengths. I try to serve out of my strengths and surround myself with people who can help me fill in my deficits. ‘Cause I think that’s the best way to lead.” The regular doubters primarily saw self-doubt as part of the journey, as Kiara explained:

I think you always doubt yourself in some shape, form, or fashion. At some point in the journey you will doubt yourself. You will doubt if you’re capable. You will doubt if you even want to do it. So, people, women, will experience doubt—I know I have. I know it wasn’t the first and the last time. It will happen again.

Other participants believed doubt was a product of being the “first” in a position. Donna said, “That may be inherent in being the first in various places, that you doubt

yourself. Or, I certainly have over the years.” On the other hand, Sharon described it as a product of the position itself, “I realized that most people who are presidents come in with a lot of doubts about themselves. That’s just normal. It’s normal for women and it’s normal for men, and you just tough it out and do what you have to do.” As Lola, a dean, advanced and took on more responsibility, she said:

I realize more and more what I’m not good at, and I think I aspire to be something that no one can be, right? I’m good at everything. I can talk to everybody. I can figure out every situation. I have to remind myself that that’s not realistic, that the best thing to do is bring people into a group that can complement and give some of those specifics.

Even for regular doubters, they do not stay in a place of self-doubt. Julia explained her times of self-doubt: “There have been many of those. They’re usually more of a fleeting moment. I haven’t had a time that I’ve become depressed or despondent or overwhelmed that lasted long.” Even so Julia acknowledged, “I might wake up in the morning and think, ‘Oh dear, this day has got more than I can bear today.’” Participants described varying ways of managing with the doubt. For Julia, her faith helped her sort through her times of self-doubt.

The reason I say that it would be short is because as soon as I get to the Lord, then he would say, “No, you can’t do it. But you can do all things through me, because I’m going to give you strength.” So, the focus for me just had to be to get beyond my own human limitations.

Personal faith was one of many ways that women coped with or overcame self-doubt. “Sometimes the best thing I can do is to get my ego out of the way,” Mary, a college president said. “Make the right decisions that have not so much focus on my ability or lack of ability and just kind of not think about that, just do it, and then trust that the instincts are good and that God is guiding in that process.” Focusing on the bigger

picture, usually in the context of personal faith, was a strategy used by several regular doubters.

Personal affirmations were another coping mechanism. Kiara explained that when self-doubt comes, she reminds herself, “Well, you thought you couldn’t here, but you did and you’ll do this, too. So, go do it.” Similarly, Madison shared how she talks to herself in these moments. “I talked myself off the ledge. I was like, ‘Okay, Madison, you prepared, you don’t know everything, but yeah, you know something, you probably know more than these students.’ But I got through that first class. Then it was like, ‘Oh, I can do this.’” Madison went on to say that this experience was recurring with each new job she took. “When I felt that way, it just made me prepare better to make sure I didn’t fail, that I didn’t embarrass myself or hurt the university or the school or college of business, or whatever.” For Madison, a little bit of self-doubt applies the right amount of pressure to keep her on her performing her best.

When the doubt became too heavy, participants assessed what needed to change to make their work sustainable. Michelle explained that her workload became more than she wanted. “I’ve been working 60-80 hours a week for most of the last year. That’s not super sustainable for a human life. I don’t want to do that. So, there’s a technical doubting my ability and then there’s a ‘This is actually really not good.’” Once Michelle realized this was an issue of “pure workload,” she signaled to the president that “something needs to shift so that I don’t burnout or have a major medical crisis, or decide to opt for some easier job that I don’t want as much.” Diana shared her escape route, “There isn’t a day, almost a week, that goes by that I don’t think about going back to faculty. Like, ‘Well, I can just go back to faculty.’” One participant succumbed to this

option. Kayla, a vice president, felt pressured by the sum of her commitments more than her capacity for her job. “I didn’t worry about my actual ability to do the work. It was more around would I have time to do what needed to be done to be successful.” Kayla’s superiors created very difficult working environments, including behaviors of bullying and bias.

Every job has aspects to it that are unpleasant. When I have those kinds of experiences in an academic context, you know, as a professor and as a researcher, I could easily cope with them. I’d get ticked off or rant and rave to my husband, you know, whatever. But it didn’t make me fundamentally question what I was doing. But when I was an administrator, every set back made me think about divorce. When a relationship is good and you have an argument over something, okay, you have an argument over that thing and it blows over and you carry on. When a relationship is bad and you have an argument over that same little thing, it’s immediately cause for reevaluating the relationship. That’s what I felt about my relationship to administration.

Everything that happened, I evaluated in terms of, “Oh, I can’t do this anymore.” In other spheres of work, like as an academic or in other roles that I’ve had in other situations, I don’t react that way. To me that was a very important sign that I, myself, was not temperamentally cut out for doing this work, because it upset me more than it should. I got overly upset by the setbacks that I had, and I think had I fundamentally been more committed to the path I would have found a way of dealing with it.

After many years in two taxing senior positions in administration, Kayla ultimately stepped back into a faculty role. She is the only participant in this study who took this route, but she was not the only one who had encountered steep difficulties. Nancy was involved in a particularly tumultuous situation at her institution. “I definitely had days where I got up in the morning and said, ‘I just can’t keep doing this, this is really hard.’” In Nancy’s institutional environment, she was being severely questioned by her subordinates within her first year in the position. “I doubted myself at times. Like, ‘I don’t even know what to next. I don’t know who I can talk to, because they don’t know either.’” Nancy struggled to know what to do in her situation, which

increased her doubt. “A couple things I did that [others] said to do, just made matters worse. There were times where I just felt completely flummoxed.” Particularly in challenging situations, doubt felt inescapable for some women.

Almost Never

When a participant was asked about self-doubt, if they did not reply immediately with an “absolutely” or an “every day,” then they almost certainly paused and then replied with a “not really” or “I can’t think of a time.” Interestingly, participants either thought about regular doubts or struggled to think of any. Cathy shared, “I’m pretty self-assured, so I’m never at a point, I don’t think, where I doubt that I can do something.” Cathy went on to say something expressed by most participants in this group, “For me, it was always about what do I think I need to know that I don’t and how do I fix that.”

Participants in this group talk about learning more than questioning. Cynthia said, “When you are really into what you’re doing and enjoying the leadership, you keep on learning and growing. And, as you grow and learn, you’re sights expand and your knowledge expands, and then it all sort of prepares you for the next level.” Learning helped women prepare for future jobs. Karen explained, “I’ve made mistakes and I certainly hope that I’ve learned from them over the years, but that’s different than really doubting my ability to do the job.” Joyce explained experiencing a gap in procedural knowledge, “I knew what I needed to do and I knew it was the right thing to do, I didn’t know the procedure. I didn’t know the legal landscape. I didn’t want to screw it up.” Similarly, Nikki talked about lacking knowledge or strategy.

I don’t know that I would say I doubted my ability to fulfill the expectations of the role. I would say that many times there have been challenges where I wasn’t sure that I was going to be able to find the best way forward. ... I think I’ve

always felt that I'm doing the best I can and people know that I work really, really, really hard for them and for the institution. I think that I've always felt that I had people's confidence; that they knew we would, together, find the best way forward.

Alexis said, "you always need to be self-reflective about the things that you're best at and the things that you're maybe not as good at. I don't know that I ever question[ed] my ability to do the job." Alexis found herself learning to manage aspects of the job that she was not as comfortable with doing. Out of her experiences, Alexis found that it was important to be honest with yourself to "find those people that fill in the gaps that you can't."

Overarching Observations of Women as Leaders

Most women noted some differences in a woman in leadership. Although this was not exclusively an aspect of nurture and more of an overarching question, the beliefs about women as leaders may be a result of what women have been nurtured to believe. However, as the findings conclude, this is an important moment to pause and consider the difference, if any, a woman in higher education leadership makes.

Women leaders, according to participants, were expected to lead differently from men, brought a unique perspective to the role, had to work harder than men, and served as a model for women. Although many of these differences have been discussed in other areas of the findings, each one will briefly be covered here to look at the nuances of women leaders. Additionally, some women vocalized that there were no hard and fast differences between men and women in leadership, which will also be reviewed at the end of this section.

Expectations

Women believed that they were expected to lead differently from men. At times this web of expectations was difficult to navigate, and women found this to be a unique part of their journey into administration. Women felt they were expected to be gentle and kind, less direct or assertive. Betty expressed that she felt faculty and staff expected her to be more nurturing because she is a woman. “I think there’s just a difference in the expectation of how they’ll feel in working with a president that’s a female, compared to a male. I think they expect it’s going to be a little bit more...warmer and fuzzier.” When women did not fit the unspoken expectations, they experienced surprise and confusion from others at the institution. However, participants, like Alexis, noted that she still had to lead out of her strengths instead of feeling pressure by the gendered expectations. Alexis shared, “You have to be careful not to sort of fall into those expectations or try so hard not to fall into those expectations as you’re doing things that aren’t natural to you.” Participants reported facing more expectations attached to their gender than they believed that men faced.

One strategy participants utilized to deal with differing expectations was clear communication. Julia explained, “Communication is a very important thing for me. ... I try to give [my leadership team] a head’s up, and let them have information ahead of time, to help them be prepared, so they can be good leaders, too.” Women also felt they carried a relational burden, like Nikki, who had women students talk with her instead of their immediate male supervisor. “Two of the women ... came to me with their concerns, even though that’s not my area of oversight, but they felt that they could talk to me in a way that I would hear them differently, and they’re right.” Nikki shared how she used

those relationships to be an advocate for others. “I became their advocate with my male colleague, who oversees this area.” In this way, women were not troubled by the expectations but used strategies to integrate positive leadership tactics into their style of leading. Additionally, many women noted dealing with expectations at the start of a new position, but not necessarily throughout their tenure in the role. Cathy expressed how expectations shifted, “I think that when you move into these roles, the people who work for you believe that you will behave a certain way because of your gender, and then over time they discover that’s not really true.” Even so, this was an added dimension to leadership for women.

Perspective

In a positive light, women believed they brought a unique perspective to their senior leadership roles. To varying degrees, women believed they see the world differently: think differently, decide differently, act differently. Out of their different way of thinking, Gloria explained, “Women ask different kinds of questions. ... I certainly think women’s leadership, I think people of color’s leadership, not just to be clicking off the box of diversity, provides for a different viewpoint because we’ve had different experiences.” One way women brought fresh perspective was simply by their presence. Many women mentioned that having a woman in the mix “raises the bar on other people being conscientious” about diversity. Adrienne said it this way, “When women are in the room, the room gets smarter. They bring particular skill sets, and so I think women in higher ed, at the executive level, are making a significant impact and improving the quality of the offerings.” The presence of women affects how everyone

around them works, or in the words of Sydney, a woman's presence "restructures [and] reorganizes institutional patterns."

Another diverging aspect of women's perspective is that they decide differently, according to several participants. Out of a tendency toward collaborative leadership, women are more likely to make decisions based on the input of others, or at minimum, listen and involve others in their community in the decision-making process. Describing her willingness to entertain other ideas and even to alter her plans, Julia explained, "I'm willing to listen well and to change my mind. I will always have a view. I don't deny that ... but I will listen to other views and can be persuaded that they have brought insight into something that's helpful." Other participants described going on a "listening tour" to hear from others in their institution when they started a new position. Many women described this openness to others as typically a female trait. Motherhood was pegged as contributing to the way some women decide differently. Mary explained:

Because it's inculcated in our role as mothers, in our role as women, ... we have to negotiate for what we get. We cannot just say, "This is it." We are always within a larger group, trying to make sure that there is a win-win, rather than a binary "You win, or you lose." You are trying to make sure that there is a win-win across the board. Somebody will lose, and you have to accept that, but our instincts, I think, are to try to create win-win's.

One drawback, a few women pointed out, is that women may include others because men can win an argument based on power and presence whereas women feel they need to justify their position.

Lastly, although some participants disagreed, others believed that women behave differently. Debra talked about her staff of primarily women and her "theme" for the year. "As a woman, I'm just particularly attuned to, sort of knowing that we have to take care of ourselves in order to be our best selves to serve our greater purpose of taking care

of the students.” She clarified that a man could have taken a self-care approach, like she did, but she felt her identity as a woman influenced her perspective. Several women mentioned paying more attention to the interpersonal and individual needs of people in the office than their male predecessors in their roles. Melissa saw her orientation toward people as an asset to her leadership, “I think one of the things that makes me successful is my desire to know people and to learn about them, and to reflect that learning back to them, making people feel like they matter.” Women generally agreed that a woman’s different perspective was helpful to the university at large.

Work Harder

Hard work was both expressed as a requirement and a style. Women felt they *had* to work harder than men to achieve the same things, and women viewed themselves as competitive and naturally hard-working. For Anna, hard work was a choice as she admitted, “Some of us women presidents say that we think we work harder than the men do. ... We give up a lot to make sure we get it the way we think it ought to be.” Another way hard work was expressed as a requirement was through caution. Beverly explained, “Men more than likely get a pass on the failure of reading the culture wrong. Meaning that they’ll get a second opportunity. Their boss will be more forgiving of their mishap than if it’s a woman.” Some level of healthy fear existed among women about watching every step. Faith, a provost, talked about this, “You had to be five times better than anybody else. You had to be absolutely unequivocally consistently the most outstanding person ever – just to get the same level of attention as some mediocre male. That’s the truth.” Women of color felt even more pressure. “I am often and completely aware that

it's hard to be a Black woman," Gloria explained the way she had always known she had to work harder.

I grew up with my mom saying, "You have to be twice as good to be considered equal to your white colleagues." She didn't say that with rancor. She didn't say it with nastiness. It was just a matter of fact thing. "You've got to be good at what you do and better, because of the world we live in."

Women felt that they had to work harder in order to achieve the higher standards and combat the additional scrutiny.

Model

A woman leader communicated more than gender to some participants; a woman leader symbolized a hope and a future for other women. As Gail reminded, "If you are the first or the only, or you're one of a few, you cannot underestimate the importance of what you stand for." Participants believed that a woman in a senior leadership role encouraged, empowered, and inspired other women and minorities. Adrienne said, "It's very empowering for other women to observe [a woman leader]. It's empowering to women students. It's empowering to women staff. It's empowering to women faculty. I think having a woman leader symbolizes gender equity." At least half of participants noted that having a woman in leadership provided a role model for other women. Similarly, Ann said, "When other women see my leadership it gives them courage themselves to stretch. As a role model, I think that having a woman in my position is very important." Most women mentioned that younger women needed to see the options available to them. "It is especially a difference for other women and especially younger women who are looking at possibilities and setting goals for themselves to realize that that is something that I can achieve or that I can do," Betty explained. Women believed

that younger women identified with women leaders without realizing it, as Betty contended, “It might be overt, but I think a lot of times it’s more subconscious message that we give to people in being able to see people that they identify with in leadership roles.” The service women leaders provided as a role model was typically an indirect positive effect of their role. Sharon reflected how she had personally benefitted from a woman president who served as a model for her.

She was just a special friend of mine, and I loved watching the way she was a leader...because she was temperamentally more like me. She wasn’t brash and outspoken and bombastic; she was collegial, she was collaborative, she was a gentle person, she had a kindness to her, she had a subtle sense of humor. She was persistent, she was smart, she didn’t have to be the center of attention. She was just a very strong leader. That’s more of my style, so it was good for me to see women like myself who were presidents.

By watching a woman with a similar manner do the job of presidency, Sharon was personally encouraged that she could also become a president, and a few years later, she did.

For some participants, the lack of women leaders was one of the reasons they entered administration. “As a female leader, I have an added responsibility to model leadership for other women. So, part of the reason I actually got into administration, ... was because ... there weren’t very many female role models within the leadership of the college.” Diana explained that the percentage of female students was much higher in her college than the percentage of female administrators, and she felt responsible to help reconcile that gap. “I’m always taking that responsibility very seriously, that I feel that I have a responsibility to model female leadership for other women, who may be coming up behind me, and to mentor as many women as I feel like I can.” Similarly, Nancy explained that women students and women faculty need “to experience having a woman

dean because as a woman, I'm aware of all kinds of dynamics, and systemic issues that a person who enjoys white male privilege literally might not even be aware of."

Ultimately, many participants shared that serving as an example for women was an "incredibly rewarding" aspect of their leadership as they helped people "see what's possible."

No Difference

A small number of participants believed there to be "no difference" in having a woman leader than a man leader. Participants attributed this to equal effectiveness to lead a university, dependence on personality rather than gender, and variability of institutional environment. Destiny claimed that the primary difference is that "some people don't like women in leadership roles. You're going to have to maneuver around those people who don't like women in leaderships roles. But that shouldn't stop women from aspiring to leadership roles or, frankly, getting them." With time, Destiny thinks that discrimination is becoming less of an issue for women and the playing field is being flattened—returning to the idea that there are fundamentally no differences between men and women leaders. With many factors at play, Kelly explained, "I wish I could give you a wonderful list of things that every woman brings into leadership, but it really depends on the individual." The small minority that believed there was no difference in having a woman leader had considered gender but found it to be equitable in leadership.

Beyond the lack of gender uniformity in leadership, a few more women expressed not even considering gender as a factor. These women believed "there may be differences but I don't think in those terms." In other words, participants that fell into this category believed it was not worth focusing on the differences. Julia explained, "I have never

looked for the male/female difference.” In some ways, not “seeing” gender was a leveling strategy women employed. Ann said, “I don’t consider myself a woman leader. I consider myself a leader who is a woman. I think that matters. I don’t place my gender first. I place my giftedness first.” Leadership flows out of the person, so skills were emphasized over gender. Madison shared about finding fit among male colleagues. “I was going to be one of the guys. I think that if you called any of my former male colleagues, who I started with, they would say, ‘She’s just one of us.’ ... I don’t think they saw me at some point as a woman.” Similarly, Tina saw herself as different from other women. “I never felt that being female held me back in my positions, but I wasn’t the typical female.” Many of these women sought to make gender a nonissue by focusing on finding fit rather than on their gender.

CHAPTER SEVEN

Discussion and Conclusion

This qualitative study investigated what role structure, culture, and nurture play in women's expectations of and experiences in academic leadership. The literature review suggested that current organizational structure in many settings resists and undermines women's efforts to combine work and family (American Council on Education, 2012; Ibarra & Ely, 2013; Wyer & Srull, 2014). This study examined how the sequencing of work and family influenced women's expectations and experiences of leadership in higher education. The literature also suggested that organizational culture discourages women from deviating out of traditional gender norms (Bianchi et al., 2012; Hochschild & Machung, 2012; Moe & Shandy, 2010). This study consequently looked at how women academic leaders perceive and respond to the cultural norms of their institution. The literature additionally suggested organizational nurture prepares women to be leaders (Brewer, 2016; Friday, 2014; Ibarra et al., 2010). This study sought to understand if and how women academic leaders described an experience of sponsorship—the nature of the relationship and their perceptions of its value. In this study, I evaluated the three threads of structure, culture, and nurture, both individually and collectively, to identify their respective valences and influence upon women leaders in higher education.

From interviews with 41 women in senior-level roles across four institutional types, I identified common work-family sequencing patterns, deviation from institutional norms, and several different types of mentorship. Using the three strands of structure,

culture, and nurture, I gained insight into how the institutional types influenced women serving in senior levels of higher education. This deeper look at the experiences of women academic leaders in sequencing work and family life underscores that the work of creating supportive organizational structures for women is not finished. Cultural expectations for the organizational role of women lag behind the participation of women. Furthermore, women deviate from the institutional culture through their very presence as well as by their leadership styles. Nurture emerged as the most variable of the three strands, evidenced by the broad range of experiences. This study reinforces and broadens the value of having mentors by categorizing mentors as processors, encouragers, and sponsors. I will discuss these highlighted findings in the following sections. Women uniquely managed their experiences of structure, culture, and nurture. However, I identified patterns incorporating structure, culture, and nurture across institutional types that surfaced as three distinct archetypal groups of women's leadership orientation.

Archetypes of Women's Leadership Orientation

Throughout the interviews, each woman presented herself through what she said. Some women conveyed an overarching care for women's rights and the advancement of women. Other women did not want to talk about their identity as a woman and continually clarified throughout the interview that they did not see things according to gender. Still other women emphasized their good fortune in becoming a senior leader in higher education. Not until after coding did I realize these impressions were not directly captured by any one category or theme. These women, clustered by emphasis, showed trends across several codes, institutional types, age groups, and years of experience in higher education. Ultimately, three archetypes of leadership orientation became evident

among the women in this study: passers, pushers, and peacekeepers. Archetypes represent commonalities of a group, yet do not describe fully any one person. Interestingly, each archetype represents about a third of the whole pool of participants.

Passers

The first archetypal group is made up of women who stated that gender was not an issue for them. Drawing on racial passing theory and research on stigma, these women will be known as “the passers,” (Dawkins, 2012; Goffman, 1963). Racial passing theory suggests that members of a minority race will sometimes learn the behaviors, linguistic style, and even clothing styles, of the majority race in order to “pass” as the majority (Dawkins, 2012). This does not mean they change their skin color, but, for all cultural purposes, these “passers” have learned how to be accepted in the majority. As Marcia Dawkins (2012) explains, “everybody passes”—the theory can extend beyond racial minorities. Passing has been happening since intercultural and interracial contact commenced, but passing theory helps explain a strategy some people use to find “fit” or minimize their stigma. A college president, Cynthia, observed this pattern among her peers:

When I saw a lot of women in high leadership positions, at a time from maybe a generation before me, at a time when there were very few women in those roles, those women seemed to have taken on more of the male characteristics, and maybe they had to behave that way in order to survive in that world.

Cynthia was obviously defining herself outside of the group of women who “passed” as men in order to enjoy comradery and advance in their careers. Jasmine, a vice president, was able to “pass” because she was accustomed to being around men. She attributed her

success to her background, “I have spent my entire life with men. I think that gave me a certain skill set. Also, maybe, a thicker skin or a different perspective.”

Participants in this group shared about learning things that interested their male co-workers in order to join the conversation (i.e., Julia learning to talk about football with her male colleagues). Some participants explicitly standardized their appearance by wearing black or beige suits and formalized their conversational strategies to avoid topics that might be considered “feminine.” These learned behaviors were deliberate modifications to appear more like, or pass as, a man. Ann described her strategies as a vice president: “I don’t talk about my family. I don’t talk about my children unless it comes out of a more established conversation. I primarily dress in a suit or I dress in formal attire.” Women discussed adopting different practices at different points in their career. Earlier in her career, Mary, a president, was “always looking for a way to either say, ‘I’m not a woman.’ ...[or] to downplay that I was a woman...or just to ignore the fact that I was a woman.” Mary explained that now she does not even think about gender.

Research on stigma, on which racial passing theory is loosely based, suggests similarly that “the more allied the individual is with normals, the more he [sic] will see himself in non-stigmatic terms, although there are contexts in which the opposite seems true” (Goffman, 1963, p. 107). Passers in this study were “more allied” with the “normals” (male administrators) with higher likelihood of overlooking their gender “stigma” or identity. In the case of the women in this study, they had succeeded in advancing within the male-dominated system of higher education. Sydney referenced the systemic barriers as she described her experience: “we adopt the postures, perspectives,

understandings about structure and leadership and rules and power through the lens of the white man with whom we work, because we don't yet have real clarity about what the alternative is." For some participants, like Sydney, passing was the obvious or even natural mode of behavior.

Although women in senior leadership in higher education are defined as the minority, the women in this group did not see themselves as innately different from men senior leaders in higher education. They had learned to pass as "normal," so they then acted out of a non-stigmatized belief about themselves.

Structure and passers. Career was the primary priority for women in this archetype group, but instead of prioritizing career to the detriment or exclusion of family, they operated as a stereotypical breadwinner. Emily, a dean and a passer, explained, "We looked probably like every work-a-holic couple you've ever seen, or stereotyped, except that I was in the husband role." All passers were married, with one exception (Emily) who was divorced. More than half had children (about 62 percent). More than among pushers or peacekeepers, passers all described having supportive husbands, who were primarily trailing spouses (85 percent). A trailing spouse is one who puts their own career goals behind those of their spouse. Passers were able to prioritize their career because of the cooperation and support of their husbands and through sequencing.

Sequencing is a way to discuss life course and a strategy for navigating work and family life by ordering each one. None of the passers in this study had children at home, which suggests that they chose to have children earlier in their careers or chose not to have children at all. The decision to have children long before moving into senior leadership allowed passers freedom and seemingly total commitment to the demanding

work of their roles. Alternately, the decision not to have children seemed to provide optimal liberty for passers' careers. The idea of sequencing to prioritize work in some seasons and family in other seasons was somewhat exhibited by passers. However, passers may have made work the top priority while dutifully managing the needs of their families, which highlights passers' virtue of responsibility.

Culture and passers. Sociologist Gosta Esping-Andersen believes that the culture related to gender in America is in the middle of an incomplete gender revolution, which he attributes to women's life course becoming increasingly masculinized (2009). Passers symbolize the masculinized life course of women. Passers viewed themselves as "just one of the guys" —a phrase often repeated by women (Julia, Madison, Margaret—to name a few) in this group to show that they had successfully assimilated into the culture. Although this action may seem counterproductive for the advancement of women because they are progressing based on their maleness rather than femaleness, passers used their strategic stealth to actually forge the way for other women to follow them. After personally receiving strong mentorship, Emily, a dean and a passer, wanted to share her experience with the women faculty in her college. She recounted her mentor as having taken her under her wing. "I don't know why she did it, but it was lovely.... I started doing that right off the bat, or at least pretty soon after [becoming dean]," Emily said. Passers play an important role in creating a more comfortable culture for women of different styles to come in behind them.

Passers held a seemingly evolutionary view of change—that change would happen gradually over time with little effort needed. Betty shared about her approach to hiring: "I look for whoever is best qualified to fill the job. Gender does not enter into

that. ... I think if everyone does do that then we will in time see equity in the number of men and women in positions.” Betty exhibited this view of change as something that will happen over time with the “right” practices in place. Most passers did not talk about change, and those that did shared Betty’s approach of effecting change over time.

Although pushers and peacekeepers showed a higher presence at certain types of institutions, passers did not. Passers were primarily 45-60 years old and present at all institutional types in parallel representation (about 30 percent of women at each type), which suggests passing may be a product of the individual rather than the institution. The strong link to age may make generational conditions more important, or career stage may influence the behavior of passers. However, more research is needed to understand the relationship of age and archetype.

Nurture and passers. Although all archetypes experienced sponsorship, passers described an experience of sponsorship more than pushers or peacekeepers. Sponsorship has been shown in the literature and in the findings of this study to help women achieve the most senior levels of leadership (Ibarra et al., 2010). Passers showed few experiences of processors, some experiences of encouragers, but most of their experiences of mentorship were with sponsors—over and above the other archetypes. However, this should not be surprising. Previous literature shows that men typically receive sponsorship more than women (Ibarra et al., 2010). Since passers have learned male behavior, it may be that their adaptation to masculine behaviors were rewarded with sponsorship.

Passers were also the least likely to experience self-doubt. Rather than question their ability, passers were more likely to believe they needed to gain a new skill. A focus

on developing skills caused women in this group to have what Carol Dweck (2006) calls a growth mindset. People with a growth mindset believe that abilities can be developed as opposed to people with a fixed mindset who believe that abilities are predetermined (Dweck, 2006). Passers exhibited characteristics of believing they could learn, like Cathy who said, “For me, it was always about what do I think I need to know that I don’t and how do I fix that.” Instead of doubting themselves, passers looked for self-improvement in the forms of additional training, mentorship, or hard work. Dweck found that people with a growth mindset are more likely to flourish than those with a fixed mindset (2006). Although it is not evident that pushers and peacekeepers had fixed mindsets, passers clearly expressed growth mindsets.

In summary, passers presented themselves with a characteristically-male sense of confidence—they were adaptive to a normatively male culture and competent in their work, which allowed them to thrive in a male-dominated environment. Passers prioritized career while navigating family life and were supported by sponsors and trailing husbands. For an overview of passers, see Table 7.1.

Table 7.1

Associated Characteristics of Passers

Characteristics	Passers
Philosophy Orientation	“One of the guys”
Approach to change	Goal-oriented
Defining	Adaptive
Characteristic Core	Assertive
Motivation Virtue	Career
Institutional Types	Responsibility
Self-doubt	Collegial (31%), Bureaucratic (33%), Political (33%), and Anarchical (29%) Least likely

Pushers

The next archetypal group, the “pushers,” were the women who propelled their institutions toward gender equity. Commonly self-identified feminists, pushers were a mixed group of women who had the greatest variety of family situations. Among them were women who were married, divorced, widowed, remarried, and single—in fact, single women were exclusively pushers. Age played a role—pushers were either older or younger but there was a gap in the 45-60 age range (filled by passers). A few of the oldest women in this study were the ones that were on the frontlines in paving the way for women in the workforce—the original fighters for women’s rights.

After finishing college, Pamela, a retired president and the oldest participant in this study, described working in a student life job at a university in the 1960s. She recalled, “the uprising and all of the campus unrest. ... It was very galvanizing. ... They were reorganizing and entering a massive planning process to think about how different

the future would be.” Pamela was highly involved in the women’s rights revolution. She never finished a master’s or doctorate degree, but she eventually advanced to the level of presidency, which she held for 30 years. Pamela said that her husband was “the stay-at-home parent for [her] whole career.” She represents the older group of pushers that pioneered a way for women to lead in higher education. Unlike a passer, Pamela did not take a traditional route through graduate education, but she forged her way to the top with only an undergraduate degree, which included claiming her identity as a woman. She was the first woman in the nation to be president at her institutional type—a true pioneer.

The second group is the younger cohort of pushers who represent the resurgence of feminist beliefs. Melissa, a dean in her forties, describes herself as “a girly girl,” which for her means that she embraced her femininity and pushed the conventional boundaries. Beyond her “super fun colored” suits, Melissa intentionally talked about her children and brought her children to campus events.

I am very, very, very unapologetically and visibly a mom. When we did [a basketball event] I got ... clearance to bring my boys on the court, because I was the only woman out there, and I had my two little kids holding my hands the whole time. Because I wanted every other faculty member to see that you can ... You can’t have it all, but you can balance it. ... If we have children coming to my football suite, I will bring my children so they can play with the other kids. I don’t apologize for it. ...

I will miss two dinners a week, no more if possible. ... There are weeks where I’m out of town three nights a week, but it’s my goal and everybody understands, if my kid is sick, I’m leaving. I work 80-90 hours a week, so I’m not really going to explain myself.

Melissa planned protected family time into her work schedule in an effort to create work-life balance for herself but also as an example for others. Like other young pushers, Melissa found it important to be a visible role model for other women. “I know it’s helped my female faculty. I know that people feel the most comfortable being a parent,

male or female, in my college,” Melissa said. Not only did pushers want to help other women along, they wanted to see real change in policies and advocated for equitable environments. Melissa explained one issue that was important to her:

I’d pushed for automatic stop clocks for both genders because we had had some equity issues with men in my college in stopping their clocks and it shouldn’t be a choice, and it shouldn’t be perceived as I need help, it should just be a default when you have a child adopted or live birth.

Melissa even used the term “pushed” to describe how she had affected policy change at her institution. Similarly, Anna, a president, shared her convictions: “When you see inequity, you have to speak up for it. I’m really big into equity and diversity and fairness, it’s very important to me.” Like Melissa and Anna, pushers were principle-oriented and driven to aggressively and relentlessly pursue change based on their convictions, which highlights their virtue of determination. Although passers and peacekeepers may believe in diversity and equity, pushers were by far the most vocal in expressing those convictions, which highlights pushers virtue of determination.

Structure and pushers. The pursuit of progress is reminiscent of organizational behavior theories of change agency. According to organizational change theory, the leadership of a change agent is evidenced through (1) a decision and a commitment to bring about change and (2) action in such a way that promotes progress in the environment (Newcombe & Conrad, 1981). Pushers in this study operate as change agents in their university’s environment by committing to modeling leadership for other women and through their action in sponsoring other women. Change agents can “be instrumental in providing direction and impetus” (Newcombe & Conrad, 1981, p. 566). Thus, just as change agents play an important role in organizational behavior, pushers

play an important role in positively deviating from institutional norms to push the academy toward gender equity.

Pushers were the most vocal about the constraints of the antiquated ideal worker model and the impact of working for two greedy institutions (Ward & Wolf-Wendel, 2012; Wilk, 2016; Williams, 2000). The ideal worker model continues to be the default standard for good work, but pushers were making concerted efforts to redefine the ideal worker. The pressure for time and performance that women working in higher education experience often exceeds that of the ideal worker norm due to the tendency of the academy to be a greedy institution (Ward & Wolf-Wendel, 2012). However, a woman academic leader with children works for two greedy institutions. The commitment required for university administrators is all-encompassing, and the full attention demanded by children, particularly young children, is constant. This was best understood by Kiara, the participant with the youngest child (the only participant with a child under age five). Kiara, a vice president and a pusher, shared her struggles “with being 100% mom with being 100% employee, being 100% wife, being an active community citizen, and trying to balance it all.” Kiara shared that the struggle extends to all areas of domestic responsibility as a parent of a young child. Pushers and peacekeepers still had children at home, but passers did not (all of their children were in college and/or adults).

Culture and pushers. Women who pushed for women’s rights were predominantly at bureaucratic and collegial institutions with practically no presence at political and anarchical institutions. Collegial institutions, according to Birnbaum, seek consensus, and bureaucratic institutions seek rationality. Thus, the widespread acceptance of women in leadership (representing a cultural change) is difficult to

achieve—collegial institutions want complete agreement while bureaucratic institutions want to maintain a functioning system, but those things do not happen quickly. Although one may expect to find pushers at larger, typically more progressive institutions, my findings showed that they were not present there among study participants. Rather, bureaucratic and collegial institutions are slower to change, which may explain why women felt they needed to be pushers in those environments. Lola, a dean at a bureaucratic institution, explained, “A woman in a leadership position on a campus, I think, sends a message, ‘We are progressive’ to the whole campus. ‘We are not just stuck with the white man.’” Lola’s explanation makes sense only in an institutional setting where “progressive” is not the typical message being conveyed. At a bureaucratic institution that is characteristically unresponsive to society, pushers served to challenge the norms and present an alternative. Correspondingly, collegial institutions are characteristically reluctant to change—an organizational structure and culture where pushers find themselves needed. Adrienne, president of collegial institution, believed that women leaders are needed at this time in history.

I think it is in many respects the time for women. I think people who’ve done studies of board constitution, as well as leadership teams that include women, understand that when women are in the room, the room gets smarter. They bring particular skill sets and so I think women in higher ed, at the executive level, are making a significant impact and improving the quality of the offerings.

Pushers, like Adrienne, saw their role as helping their institution catch up with national trends or important movements in higher education.

Pushers’ commitment to change flows out of their willingness to deviate from the status quo. Talcott Parsons (1951) explained that individuals want to learn and conform to the values, norms, and expectations of society, but those who have been inadequately

socialized and are not committed to the values and norms of society are considered deviants. In this regard, pushers may be socialized, in Parsons' words, "inadequately"—or maybe simply socialized *differently*. Childhood experiences and socialization may impact women's willingness to deviate. Other researchers have examined the role of childhood and women's leadership (Hyvärinen & Uusiautti, 2014; Madsen, 2010). Childhood experiences were found to influence women's perceived capacity for leadership (Madsen, 2010). Safety emerged as the most influential feature of the female leaders' childhood homes. A safe environment formed through mutual affection and a positive relationship with the community (Hyvärinen & Uusiautti, 2014). These archetypes of women's leadership orientation are influenced by women's childhood and past.

Nurture and pushers. Pushers described experiences of sponsors, processors, and encouragers, but out of the three archetypes, they had fewer experiences of mentorship. Pushers' behavior and initiative suggests that they may be slightly more self-sufficient or independent and not require external support at the same level as peacekeepers and passers. Naturally relentless in their pursuits, pushers may not have had, or believed they had a need for a mentor to motivate or encourage them. Mary believed it was generational timing that affected her mentorship experience: "I came either too early or too late. You know, I'm not sure, but there was not a formal mentoring movement for women [at that time]." Pushers who did experience mentorship typically considered it to be less critical to their success.

In summary, pushers were passionate about women's rights and advancing gender equity in higher education and institutional type compelled their efforts. Pushers led out

of their convictions and chose deviance to see change affected. For an overview of passers and pushers, see Table 7.2.

Table 7.2

Associated Characteristics of Passers and Pushers

Characteristics	Passers	Pushers
Philosophy	“One of the guys”	“One giant leap for womankind”
Orientation	Goal-oriented	Principle-oriented
Approach to change	Adaptive	Relentless
Defining Characteristic	Assertive	Aggressive
Core Motivation	Career	Women
Virtue	Responsibility	Determination
Institutional Types	Collegial (31%), Bureaucratic (33%), Political (33%), and Anarchical (29%)	Collegial (46%), Bureaucratic (42%), Political (0%), and Anarchical (0%)
Self-doubt	Least likely	Mixed

Peacekeepers

Women in this third group were “peacekeepers,” not to be confused with peacemakers; these women ruled with “an iron fist in a velvet glove,” as one participant described. Though archetypally kind, peacekeepers wanted to affect change—slowly and gradually, of course—but with a sense of mission and purpose.

Peacekeepers were guided by their values and their relationships. Values pervaded the peacekeepers descriptions of themselves and what is needed in higher education right now. Although seemingly similar to the way pushers held strong convictions, peacekeepers’ sense of values was an internal guide more than an external

campaign. “I think one of the roles that’s emerging right now is almost like the moral backbone of the university,” Joyce, a dean, said. “It’s an historic moment. I don’t mean that women are more moral than men, I just think we’re in a moment where situations and behaviors that have been associated with ‘that’s just how men are,’ I think there’s going to be less tolerance for that.” Joyce expressed how values drive her but are also being demanded at this point in history.

Some scholars in political science label this kind of leader as a diplomat (Bjola, 2015; Jervis, 1976). In his landmark book in political psychology, Robert Jervis described diplomats as a product of their anarchical environment (1976). Remarkably, peacekeepers represented 67 percent of women at political institutions and 71 percent of women at anarchical institutions, which makes it unsurprising that peacekeepers in this study used symbolism, ritual, and tradition to inspire their constituents. Cynthia, a president at a political institution, explained how the history of her institution as a women’s college informed her leadership.

This institution, in particular, one of their areas of strength and something they do well is give many of these women who come to this university, who have never thought of themselves as leaders, or never have taken any leadership roles, ever – which is the case, by the way of many girls and women, because many times in school the guys will take on the role, the leadership roles, and the girls are happy to support them or sit back....

When they come to this institution, because we only have 10 percent men, there’s not enough guys to go around for every leadership position in the different classes, study groups, student body president ... so the women have to step up. They learn in various different roles and maybe they fail, but it’s failing in a safe environment. So, they learn to find their voices and become real leaders.

In her role as president, Cynthia capitalized on the university’s heritage to empower her women students as part of the legacy of the institution.

Further and more recent development of a diplomatic leader describes them as leaders that must prove themselves. “Diplomats are not passive rule-followers. They do have the capacity to inspire and mobilize people in support of collective projects, but it is up to them to demonstrate that they have the necessary skills to do that” (Bjola, 2015, p. 8). Peacekeepers spanned all ages but about half were 61-65 years old, and many referenced having to work harder than men to achieve the same ends. “I think you have to work harder to show your credentials and be prepared as a woman,” Joyce, a dean, explained. “You’re under scrutiny all the time for things.” Political science theory confirms that leaders acting as diplomats are under scrutiny and must demonstrate through the conflict their problem-solving and managing skills (Bjola, 2015).

Structure and peacekeepers. Of the three archetypes, peacekeepers were most likely to hold a doctoral degree. An emphasis on doctorate degrees may suggest that credentials were an important key for them to move through the system. Peacekeepers, due to their nature, may have needed credentials whereas pushers may have been more likely to advocate their own way and passers were more likely to be sponsored. However, participants from all three archetypes agreed that a doctorate is important. Trinity described, “I do believe ... getting a doctorate degree is critically important—if you’re going to work in higher ed, you’ve got to have the union card.” Peacekeepers needed the credential, and this “union card” served them well.

Peacekeepers valued family over their career, yet of the archetypes, their approach to sequencing was the most likely of the three archetypes to including delaying childbearing until after graduate school or after achieving tenure—twice as likely as either passers or pushers to wait to have children. Intentional sequencing of children

aligns with the peacekeepers' wise nature. Peacekeepers followed the established processes and worked within the systems rather than trying to make hasty changes. Even so, family was important enough for women to take time with their children or even "a whole month gap ... from a work standpoint" in the summer, as Donna, a dean, described. Peacekeepers unabashedly made family-affected decisions. Joyce explained her job transitions and how "every time it's been for family." These women not only kept the peace at work, but there's a sense that they were peacekeepers at home as well by their commitment to their family's wellbeing. Peacekeeping was pervasive, not just relegated to their professional persona. Women were interested in keeping the peace as they advanced, which is understandable since most served at large institutions with competing interests.

Culture and peacekeepers. Values and relationships steered women in this group. Peacekeepers had a relational orientation that undergirded their strategic ability to negotiate their way to the top. Diana, a vice president, shared about the relational dimension of her work.

I think I am much more sensitive to the interpersonal relationships of my own leadership team. I pay attention to things like, "Are people getting their professional development needs met? Am I mentoring the women on my staff, or the women at my university, or other women that I know at the academy? Do I make sure that we're having fun on the job, too?" I think I take a much more nurturing role.

Diana recounted the ways that she kept the needs of those on her leadership team on her mind. Women in this group were also more likely to embody characteristically feminine qualities like gentleness and humility. Several women, like Diana, described

themselves as relational, nurturing, collaborative—complemented by their solid inner strength that allowed them to lead with authority.

Although operating in a male-dominated environment, women peacekeepers typically did not make extra effort to deviate from the norms of the culture. However, their differences did not go unnoticed in the environment. Nancy explained her experience as the first woman dean at her institution, “If you’re the first woman coming into a job, there will be systems anxiety. It’s just the way it is.” Probably due to the inevitable “systems anxiety,” most of the time peacekeepers worked to maintain the culture, not deviate from it. Also, working within the culture rather than challenging it signals their diplomatic tendency to keep the peace.

Nurture and peacekeepers. Many peacekeepers mentioned being fortunate to make it to their position. Women felt privileged to have supportive husbands and mentors, not to have experienced blatant gender bias, and to have advanced to the level they had. Clearly, this was not a false humility but rather a genuine understanding that the path was not smooth for everyone. Peacekeepers were highly aware of those around them—ahead of them, behind them, beside them. Women in this group used their own experiences to help others—particularly with issues of work-life balance. Lydia, a president, said, “as a woman who has raised a family and understands what goes into that, I’m very receptive ... when people talk to me about those issues.” Their perceptiveness was one of their strengths, but also surfaced as self-reflection and regular self-doubt.

Peacekeepers were the most likely to experience regular doubt about their own work. Debra, an assistant provost, expressed, “I am not somebody who is naturally self-confident and just believes that I can do things, there’s always been self-doubt about,

‘Am I smart? Am I worthy of this position?’” Debra was not alone in her doubt; peacekeepers experienced regular doubt about “being enough” for the job. Kennedy, a dean, said it this way:

Sometimes you go really strong and if you come upon a situation that you just really haven’t faced, or you ... I think I’m going along really strong, things are going very well, and again, you say something that’s very different, or the outcomes are not looking as positive as you’d like them to be, that can make you doubt. Is this really the job I should be in? Maybe somebody else have done this better.

Even as Debra experienced doubt as part of her personality, Kennedy expressed how doubt can be situational and took her by surprise. Either way, peacekeepers found that their demanding jobs created doubt in them at times—more so than pushers or passers.

Peacekeepers also described over two-thirds of the mentorship experiences of a processor, which may highlight a particular need of peacekeepers for a conversation partner. Kimberly, a vice president and peacekeeper, explained, “I just need to tell the story and sometimes just by telling the story again you think about it in a different way.” The need for someone to identify with their situation and the boundaries of their role was important for peacekeepers.

Peacekeepers, by far, were the most likely of the three archetypes to mention networking; peacekeepers represented about 60 percent of all the experiences described about both external and internal networking. Several peacekeepers shared about colleagues that they met at a conference or leadership training. However, most participants shared that they do not remain in regular contact but still hold a close relationship. Melissa, a peacekeeper, explained, “I know in a minute if I need something I could call her. She’s awesome.” Melissa suggests that her network was valuable even if the ties were weak, aligning with Granovetter’s (1973) theory on the strength of weak

ties. Granovetter argued that weak ties were more likely to offer a sense of connection among people in different groups or organizations than those within the same groups or organizations (1973). Peacekeepers, more than the other archetypes, found the strength of weak ties to be an important part of their success and sustainability.

In summary, peacekeepers exhibited tactful and diplomatic leadership. The virtue of peacekeepers is their wisdom, which was evident through their awareness of others and presence in complex environments. Women in this group embraced some of their characteristically feminine qualities and revealed an inner strength. For an overview of all three archetypes, see Table 7.3.

Table 7.3

Associated characteristics of Passers, Pushers, and Peacekeepers

Characteristics	Passers	Pushers	Peacekeepers
Philosophy	“One of the guys”	“One giant leap for womankind”	Ones with “an iron fist in a velvet glove”
Orientation	Goal-oriented	Principle-oriented	Relationally-oriented
Approach to change	Adaptive	Relentless	Incremental
Defining Characteristic	Assertive	Aggressive	Empathetic
Core Motivation	Career	Women	Family
Virtue	Responsibility	Determination	Wisdom
Institutional Types	Collegial (31%), Bureaucratic (33%), Political (33%), and Anarchical (29%)	Collegial (46%), Bureaucratic (42%), Political (0%), and Anarchical (0%)	Collegial (23%), Bureaucratic (25%), Political (67%), and Anarchical (71%)
Self-doubt	Least likely	Mixed	Most likely

Summary

Looking across the three archetypes of women's leadership orientation, the nuances of each type become evident: passers are adaptive to a normatively male environment; pushers are relentless in their pursuit of their convictions; and, peacekeepers are the empathetic, diplomatic leaders. These three archetypes play unique roles within their specific institutional contexts. The archetypes of women's leadership orientation are not another personality type assessment, but rather, the archetypes are a combination of one's past, personality, and placement as illustrated in Figure 7.1.

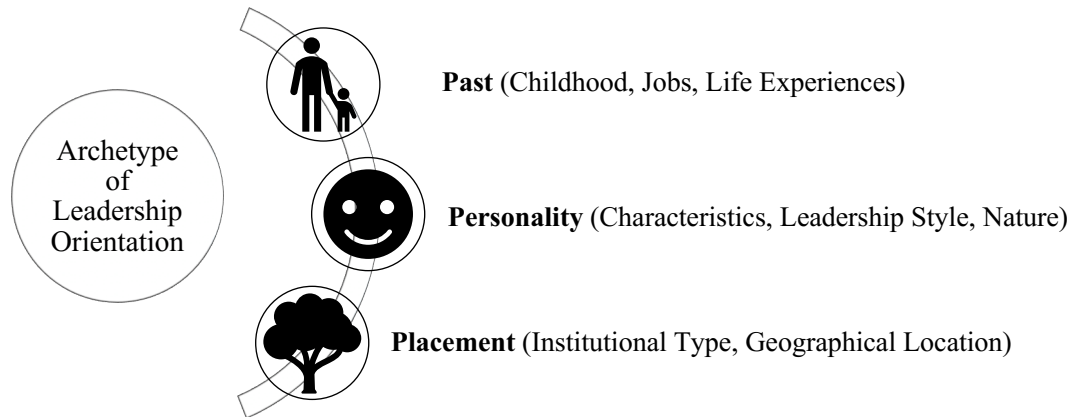


Figure 7.1: Influencing factors on the archetypes of women's leadership orientation

An aspiring woman leader can benefit from the archetypes by identifying her own archetypal tendencies, then realizing that it may be advantageous to adopt some of the strategies of the passer, the pusher, or the peacekeeper. A thorough understanding of structure, culture, and nurture within each archetype allows a woman to both identify and strategize about their situation. Women leaders tend to "fit" (and thus be selected by) particular types of environments. Aspiring women leaders can consider how every institutional type and every institution has a unique culture. Institutional boards and

administrators should consider their own culture and how basic underlying assumptions manifest in the perceptions and behavior of participants (Schein, 1985). Although the archetypes are not prescriptive, they do offer ideas and insights for strategic leadership.

In most likelihood, women are raised to understand what is normal and acceptable without realizing their gender as a stigma. Goffman offers the idea of a moral career: “persons who have a particular stigma tend to have similar learning experiences regarding their plight, and similar changes in conception of self” (1963, p. 32). Moral career has three phases. In the first phase of socialization is when the stigmatized person “learns and incorporates the standpoint of the normal” (Goffman, 1963, p. 32). The stigmatized person believes what is normal is what is acceptable. The second phase is when the stigmatized person learns of her own stigma, the consequences of possessing her stigma, and strategies for navigating reactions to her stigma. Until women are faced with the intersection of family and work, gender may never have surfaced as a stigma. Finally, the third phase is when the stigmatized person seeks to define herself apart from her stigma—without a sense of shame or avoidance (Goffman, 1963). To some degree this development happened within each of the archetypes. Most likely due to the maturity and seniority of most of the women in this study, they had fully walked through what Goffman identified as the moral career (1963). Each archetype represents a strategy for navigation, as in the second phase of moral career. In fact, that is precisely where Goffman’s idea of passing enters the picture (1963). At this stage of their career, passers were generally unaware that their gender was stigmatizing. Pushers were not ashamed and represented confidence (even pride) surrounding their gender, but they wanted to re-define how society views women. Peacekeepers seemed content with their stigmatizing

woman identity, and yet, they did not emphasize their gender as much as their beliefs and priorities.

Women must manage the stigma of being a working woman (or mother) in a male-dominated environment. “The maleness of the academic environment...remains pervasive and often powerful, even while it is undergoing significant, positive changes” (Caplan, 1993). Nevertheless, this study shows that women have found ways to navigate structure, culture, and nurture across various institutional types and personal circumstances. The question of stigma management is not a new one. People have dealt with stigmas of all kinds for ages. Stigma is a stereotype about an attribute with the addition of power and moral overtones (Goffman, 1963). In this study, deviance surfaced as the context for stigma. Women leaders in higher education dealt with the contextualized stigma through deviance or through an effort to fit in (pass) among those in the power position numerically and organizationally. However, the three archetypes of women’s leadership orientation house sets of interconnected strategies women used to manage stigmas based on their past experiences, personality differences, and institutional contexts.

Although not emphasized by all of the participants, there is still a sense of the problematic nature of the system. The glass ceiling, sticky floors, and maternal walls are more recent ways to describe the fundamental problems with the system that historically excluded, marginalized, and stereotyped women. Due to this isolation in the workplace, women may have developed these three archetypal strategies. My findings, whether or not women acknowledged it, do show that women experienced being deviant from societal expectations and norms. The three archetypes of women’s leadership orientation

may be contextual strategies, but they are also necessary due to the historic prejudice and lack of accommodations provided to women.

Implications for Theory and Practice

Sequencing is a helpful concept for aspiring women leaders as they consider their own career and family trajectories. Arlene Cardozo offered the concept of sequencing in the late 1980s as a way to discuss life course and a strategy for balancing work and family life by ordering the timing of each. The philosophy behind Cardozo's theory was that women could indeed have it all just not all at one time. Thus, sequencing can be achieved by intentionally prioritizing one sphere over the other at varying intervals (Kangas, 2011). Aspiring women leaders may want to reflect critically on their preferences as they make decisions about how they structure themselves and their lives. Participants in this study illustrated that timing of children impacted career decisions, yet women found creative ways to navigate their careers in spite of the timing of children. Even some women found success with timing children prior to their career (before or during graduate school) while others were pleased they had waited until a later point in their career (like once they received tenure). Consideration of priorities and strategic timing is central to the concept of sequencing.

Deviance is one framework that helps make sense of what it means to be a woman in higher education. The idea of deviating from what is normal in an institutional culture helps explain the perceptions and reactions of women in an administrative environment that is normatively male. Women who have experienced unaccepting cultures in the form of first- or second-generation gender bias can recognize that discrimination persists and

they are not alone in their experiences. Men and women alike can continue to work together to reconcile relentless gender bias.

This study builds on findings that found sponsorship to be important. Literature has identified that, for women to advance, “the critical first step is to stop overmentoring and start accountable sponsoring for both sexes” (Ibarra et al., 2010). This study affirmed that sponsorship is a helpful, nay critical, component of most women’s experiences in academic leadership. The women in this study that received sponsorship were more likely to be in the most senior-level leadership positions. Thus, sponsorship makes a difference in the advancement of women, and women who want to advance ought to seek advocates who could sponsor them. Sponsorship and deviance are linked in this regard: to be deviant and overcome the burden of that dissonance, sponsorship is particularly important, at least in some contexts. However, most women in this study who described an experience of sponsorship mentioned someone who had chosen to invest in them. Several participants like Alexis, a college president, explained the impact of others seeing potential in them. “I think people actually saw a set of skills in me and then asked me to do things that, frankly, I wouldn’t have been able to do if somebody hadn’t asked me,” Alexis said. In other words, women and men should watch for potential in younger women and function as a sponsor for up-and-coming women leaders.

Although this study sought to understand the experiences of women leaders in higher education, a few overarching implications for higher education are worth noting. Structure, culture, and nurture combine to influence the likelihood of advancement for women academic leaders in higher education. Structure, in terms of policy, pay, and systems, needs to continue to progress toward equity (American Council on Education,

2012; Cook & Glass, 2014; Creswell, 2017; Ibarra & Ely, 2013; Ryan & Haslam, 2005).

Institutions need to continue to address invisible structural and cultural barriers.

Following the deviant behavior of women entering senior leadership positions, the literature predicts a new equilibrium for society (Esping-Andersen, 2009). Leaders in higher education can be part of finding and creating a new normal (or equilibrium) that includes women at all levels of leadership.

Nurture is essential to passers, pushers, and peacekeepers. Although institutions could take proactive steps in implementing formal and informal mentorship programs, the most powerful determinant for advancement into the highest levels of leadership in the academy is sponsorship. Leaders in higher education should consider how to create a culture of sponsorship and perhaps even build it into institutional structures.

The findings of this study showed that advancement into senior academic leadership is a two-stage process for women: (1) navigating through structure and culture and (2) capitalizing on the momentum provided by nurture. My initial observations are that women have to navigate the constraints of structure and culture (through various means), but I suspect that successful navigation is not sufficient for women to break through the glass ceiling (Hymowitz, 2004; Johns, 2013). Nurture, specifically sponsorship, emerged as the catalyst that helped women advance into senior leadership (Ibarra et al., 2010).

Women who desire to advance into senior leadership roles should be aware of the influences of institutional type as well as the interaction and roles of structure, culture, and nurture. Ultimately, the three archetypes offer a window into behaviors and leadership styles that flow out of a combination of the strands, the environment, and the

person. Aspiring leaders are not intended to “type” themselves and pick the corresponding institutional type, but rather, women who want to advance into senior leadership should be aware of the complex factors at play and the forms of coping, adaptation, and sequencing women have utilized in response.

Recommendations for Future Research

In summary, this qualitative study of women academic leaders across four institutional types and four different levels of senior leadership provided insight into the advancement of women in higher education that further research could pursue in more depth. Additional insight into how institutional type and culture affects women’s ability to advance could identify where second-generation gender bias is most persistent. With the emerging concepts of the passer, pusher, and peacekeeper, future research could explore a deeper understanding of the way women make sense of how they operate and create change within male-normative environment. More research on women within each institutional type may reveal patterns that this study missed due to size and scope. Finally, opportunities to further explore the proposed archetypes could provide a deeper understanding as well as nuances within the three types.

Conclusion

Society has made massive strides from the days when women could not attend institutions of higher learning. Women have faced and continue to face glass ceilings, sticky floors, and maternal walls while persevering through first- and second-generation discrimination (Harlan & Berheide, 1994; Hymowitz, 2004; Ibarra & Ely, 2013; Jones, 2012; Moe & Shandy, 2010). The steps that have been taken ought not be ignored or

forgotten because the victories have been hard-won and there is still much work to be done. The women in this study have revealed this very progress and exemplified the many ways through the pipeline for aspiring women leaders in higher education. No matter the archetype, institutional type, or life course, these women found ways to forge their own trail and meet (even exceed) their professional aspirations. However, women were navigating a tilted playing field that still needs to be leveled.

Women in this study inspired hope as models and as sponsors in a male-dominated environment of academia (Caplan, 1993). Although complete parity may or may not be the goal, normalizing the presence of women certainly is a first step (American Council on Education, 2016a). Women who want to lead are not looking for women's groups but for leader's groups, as several participants in this study acknowledged. The future of higher education hinges on reconfiguring the pipelines to accommodate women's unique needs and to redefine expectations from an early age to encourage women to pursue their full potential—including senior academic leadership. Across all three archetypes, women framed themselves as facing “challenges” instead of “obstacles” or “barriers.” The power of language affected their ability to view systemic issues as hurdles that could be overcome instead of blockades that were impassible. While a few women did reference systemic barriers, most of the women in this study described how they worked through the existing system. Passers, pushers, and peacekeepers navigated through systemic barriers, but ultimately, the removal of these barriers will make the path to senior leadership more accessible to women. Rather than women growing up with defined boundaries confining their abilities, women might grow up with freedom to live the life of their determining.

Women face an opportunity as awareness of and response to gender inequality continues to grow. As the American novelist and philosopher Ayn Rand said, “The question isn’t who’s going to let me; it’s who is going to stop me.” Although society is still settling on its’ new norms, women are rising into senior leadership and change is underway. If and how institutions of higher education offer support is the question that remains to be fully answered.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

Email Invitation Template

Dear _____:

I am writing to invite you to participate in an interview for a research project titled, “Structure, Culture, and Nurture in the Experiences of Women Academic Leaders.” The purpose of this study is to explore women’s experiences in academic leadership. Additionally, this study seeks to contribute new insights to the body of literature on women in leadership in higher education. This study will form the basis of my dissertation research for my doctoral degree in Higher Education Studies & Leadership from Baylor University in Waco, Texas.

Out respect your time, my request is for a single interview that will take approximately one hour. We will schedule at the time and day of your choice by telephone. Interviews for this project will be conducted in January and February 2018.

This project has been reviewed and approved by Baylor University’s Institutional Review Board which ensures that research projects involving human subjects follow federal regulations. I have attached the informed consent form for this study which will provide you with a more detailed description of this study and information pertaining to the measures that will be used to ensure participants’ confidentiality and anonymity.

If I do not receive a reply from you by January 1, 2018, I will follow up to this email with a telephone call to inquire about your willingness to participate in this study. If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact me at 254-####-#### (cell) or Savanah_Landerholm@baylor.edu. Additionally, you may contact the chair of my dissertation committee, Dr. Nathan Alleman, at 254-####-####, or Nathan_Alleman@baylor.edu.

Sincerely,

Savanah N. Landerholm
Ph.D. Candidate
Higher Education Studies and Leadership
Baylor University

APPENDIX B

Consent Form for Research

PROTOCOL TITLE: Structure, Culture, and Nurture in the Experiences of Women Academic Leaders

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR: Savannah N. Landerholm

SUPPORTED BY: Baylor University

Purpose of the research: The purpose of this study is to explore the role of structure, culture, and nurture in women's experiences in academic leadership. We are asking you to take part in this study because you are a woman leader in the academy in one of the following positions: academic dean, provost, academic vice president, chief academic officer (CAO), or president.

Study activities: If you choose to be in the study, you will:

- Provide a current copy of your CV (Curriculum Vitae) to show educational history and work experiences and timeline
- Complete an online demographic questionnaire including information about your family
- Schedule and participate in a one-hour interview about your journey to leadership in higher education
- The interview will be audio recorded and transcribed

Risks and Benefits:

You may feel emotional or upset when answering some of the questions. Tell the interviewer at any time if you want to take a break or stop the interview.

You may or may not benefit from taking part in this study. However, others may benefit in the future from the information that is learned in this study.

Confidentiality:

A risk of taking part in this study is the possibility of a loss of confidentiality. Loss of confidentiality includes having your personal information shared with someone who is not on the study team and was not supposed to see or know about your information. The researcher plans to protect your confidentiality.

We will keep the records of this study confidential on a password-protected computer. We will make every effort to keep your records confidential. However, there are times when federal or state law requires the disclosure of your records.

Authorized staff of Baylor University may review the study records for purposes such as quality control or safety.

Compensation:

You will not be paid for taking part in this study.

Questions or concerns about this research study

You can call us with any concerns or questions about the research from 8 AM to 5 PM (Central Time) on Monday through Friday. Our telephone numbers are listed below:

Savanah N. Landerholm 254-###-####

Nathan Alleman 254-###-####

If you want to speak with someone not directly involved in this research study, you may contact the Baylor University IRB through the Office of the Vice Provost for Research at 254-710-1438. You can talk to them about:

- Your rights as a research subject
- Your concerns about the research
- A complaint about the research

Taking part in this study is your choice. You are free not to take part or to stop at any time for any reason. No matter what you decide, there will be no penalty or loss of benefit to which you are entitled. If you decide to withdraw from this study, the information that you have already provided will be kept confidential. Information already collected about you cannot be deleted.

By continuing with the research and completing the study activities, you are providing consent.

APPENDIX C

Rubric for Classifying Institutions

Based on Birnbaum's (1988) Institutional Archetypes

Criteria	Collegial	Bureaucratic	Political	Anarchical
Size	<input type="checkbox"/> Small <input type="checkbox"/> Less than 2,000 students	<input type="checkbox"/> Medium <input type="checkbox"/> From 2,001 9,999 students	<input type="checkbox"/> Large <input type="checkbox"/> From 10,000 – 19,999 students	<input type="checkbox"/> Extra Large <input type="checkbox"/> More than 20,000 students
Structure	<input type="checkbox"/> Flat hierarchy	<input type="checkbox"/> Tall hierarchy	<input type="checkbox"/> Separate “silos”	<input type="checkbox"/> Fluid participation
Degrees	<input type="checkbox"/> Undergraduate	<input type="checkbox"/> Undergraduate <input type="checkbox"/> Certifications	<input type="checkbox"/> Undergraduate <input type="checkbox"/> Master's degrees	<input type="checkbox"/> Undergraduate <input type="checkbox"/> Master's and doctorate degrees <input type="checkbox"/> Professional (law, medicine)
Type of Faculty	<input type="checkbox"/> Locals <input type="checkbox"/> Ph.D. <input type="checkbox"/> Teaching-focus <input type="checkbox"/> Advisors	<input type="checkbox"/> Locals <input type="checkbox"/> Master's <input type="checkbox"/> Teaching-focus <input type="checkbox"/> Practitioners	<input type="checkbox"/> Locals and Cosmopolitans <input type="checkbox"/> Ph.D. <input type="checkbox"/> Teaching <input type="checkbox"/> Researchers	<input type="checkbox"/> Cosmopolitans <input type="checkbox"/> Prestigious Ph.D. <input type="checkbox"/> Researchers
Type of Students	<input type="checkbox"/> Residential <input type="checkbox"/> Full-time <input type="checkbox"/> Traditional	<input type="checkbox"/> Commuters <input type="checkbox"/> Part-time <input type="checkbox"/> Nontraditional	<input type="checkbox"/> Majority live off- campus <input type="checkbox"/> Some residential <input type="checkbox"/> Majority in-state	<input type="checkbox"/> Diverse (ethnic, religious, political) <input type="checkbox"/> Live off-campus <input type="checkbox"/> In-state

Note: This is based on qualities that can be assessed from an external perspective.

APPENDIX D

Demographic Questionnaire

1. **Gender:** a) male b) female
2. **Race and/or ethnicity:** _____
3. **Age:** _____
4. **Highest degree:** _____
5. **Academic field of highest degree:** _____
6. **Religious affiliation and specific denomination (if any):** _____
7. **Marital status (please circle all that apply):**
 - A) Single, never married
 - B) Single, but living with a partner
 - C) Married
 - D) Divorced
 - E) Divorced, remarried
 - F) Separated
 - G) Widowed
8. **Do you have children?**
 - A) Yes how many? _____ what ages: _____
 - B) No
9. **Please list all employment positions you have held in higher education: (e.g., adjunct instructor, assistant professor, residence life coordinator, registrar, etc.)**
10. **Total years of full-time career experience working in higher education:**
 - A) 1-5
 - B) 6-10
 - C) 11-15
 - D) 16-20
 - E) 21-25
 - F) 26-29
 - G) 30-35
 - H) 36-40
 - I) 41 or more
11. **Are you the first woman to serve in your current leadership role?**
 - A) Yes
 - B) No
 - C) Don't know
12. **What position did you hold immediately prior to your current position?**
13. **List any professional career positions you have held outside of higher education:**

APPENDIX E

Interview Protocol

Research Questions:

What role does structure, culture, and nurture play in women's experiences in academic leadership?

1. How does the sequencing of work and family influence women's experiences of leadership in higher education?
2. How do women academic leaders perceive and respond to the cultural norms?
3. Do women academic leaders describe an experience of sponsorship? If so, how?

How does the sequencing of work and family influence women's experiences of leadership in higher education?

1. Describe a moment or an influential experience when you gained clarity what you wanted to do with your life professionally.
 - a. Tell me how you came into administration.
2. Describe the stage of your family at that time.
 - a. How did your professional plans fit with your personal/family plans?
3. Describe the challenges you experienced in navigating the tension between work and family.
 - a. Share an example or two of how you have navigated work and family commitments. What worked or did not work?
4. Have issues related to personal life and family influenced your career decisions and career goals? In what ways? Can you give me a few examples?
5. Based on your CV (evaluate particular career path and timing), tell me about the role of family throughout your career.
 - a. ...you took time off. Talk about the time off.
 - b. ...you went straight through school into work without taking time off. Tell me about the role of family in that time period.
6. How have things changed at different points in your career experiences?
 - a. Early on?
 - b. Middle?
 - c. Later?

How do women academic leaders perceive and respond to the cultural norms?

1. How did you achieve your current position?
 - a. What was the chain of events?

- b. What effort did it require of you?
 - c. Have there been other women in your position?
- 2. What obstacles and opportunities were significant in your advancement?
 - a. What opportunities aided you in your advancement?
 - b. Can you give examples of structural barriers to your advancement?
 - c. What did you do to overcome the obstacles?
- 3. As a woman in the context of higher education, did you develop any strategies that you used to help you progress in your career? If so, can you describe the strategies you used?
 - a. What did you do to advance in your career?
 - b. What worked and what did not work?
- 4. Can you think of a time when you thought that being a woman would prevent you from realizing your career goals? What about *being a woman* prevented you?
 - a. What kind of resistance or obstacles did you encounter – how would you characterize them? Can you give examples?
 - b. At what level did the resistance occur (departmental, institutional, collegial)?
 - c. What changed? How did you overcome that?
 - d. Did you encounter others who questioned your ability to do the job?
 - e. Did the barriers/resistance change at different stages of your career?
- 5. In what ways has being a woman provided an advantage or opportunity for advancement into leadership?
 - a. What role did gender play in your selection for a leadership position?
 - b. How has your experience as a woman changed during your career?
- 6. How would you characterize the culture at your institution in accepting women into senior administrative positions?
 - a. Describe an example—whether accepting or not accepting.
 - b. Did you ever feel like you were acting outside of what was normal for your culture?
 - c. What difference (if any) toward accepting women have you experienced between your departmental culture and the larger institutional culture? Share an example.
- 7. What is the history of women within this university?
 - a. Is your institution used to having women in positions of authority?
 - b. Have you ever felt like there were different expectations for men and women?
- 8. Can you describe what your experience has been like as a woman in your role? What are the effects, if any, of being a woman on your role?
 - a. Do you have a specific experience that you could describe?

Do women academic leaders describe an experience of sponsorship? If so, how?

- 1. What types of professional support (formal and informal) have contributed most to your current position? Tell me more about that person/experience.

- a. What person or persons have been important to how you think about or pursue your professional goals?
 - b. In what situations was this person most important or instrumental?
 - c. What support was not provided to you that you wish you would have had?
2. Can you think of a time when you doubted your ability to meet your professional goals?
 - a. What did you do when you felt this way?
 - b. What, if anything, helped you overcome those feelings?
 3. What specific factors played a key role in your becoming an administrator?
 4. Is there anything I have not asked you that is important?

Overarching Questions:

- What advice would you offer to a woman who feels either stuck in a low-level position or unable to advance into senior level positions?
 - o If you were starting over, what would you want to know about navigating into academic leadership positions? Would you advise a woman in academia to pursue administrative leadership?
- What do you think about the current role of women in higher education?
 - o Do you believe in gender parity in higher education leadership?
- What, if any, difference do you think having a woman in a leadership role makes?
 - o What difference has it made for you, if any?
 - o How do you perceive it has changed the job that is expected of you, if at all?
 - o Has your awareness of yourself as a woman in an area (admin) typically dominated by men effected how you think about and do you work? If so, how?

APPENDIX F

Codes

- Structure
 - Sequencing
 - Family
 - Children at home
 - Tension between work and family
 - Family-affected decisions
 - Grown children
 - No children
 - Spouse
 - Equal career
 - Not supportive
 - Supportive
 - Trailing
 - Desire to Lead
 - Accidental administrators
 - Premeditated administrators
 - Second-career academic
 - Leadership style
 - Collaboration
 - Confident
 - Obstacles
 - Not trained for admin
 - Pay gap
 - Sacrifices
 - Opportunity
 - Policy
- Culture
 - Building Trust
 - Climate
 - Accepting/Fit
 - Not accepting
 - Bias
 - Blatent
 - Residual
 - Women to women
 - Bullying
 - Not heard

- Deviance
- Diverse
- Expectations
 - Different
 - Same
- First woman
- Level

- Nurture
 - Childhood
 - Parents
 - Peers
 - Mentorship
 - Informal
 - Types:
 - Encouragers
 - Processors
 - Sponsorship
 - Lack of support
 - Network
 - Internal
 - External
 - Women's group
 - Personal faith
 - Personal health
 - Self-doubt
 - Almost never
 - Regular

- Overarching
 - Advice
 - Difference of women
 - None
 - Nonissue
 - Differences:
 - Expectations
 - Model
 - Perspective
 - Stereotypes
 - Work harder

APPENDIX G

Researcher Positionality Statement

No researcher approaches their work without reason. Something drives the research, and the reader ought to know what those things are. My interest in women leaders stemmed out of my own natural inclination toward leadership. From a young age, I led my classmates both formally and informally. In high school, I served in several leadership positions and the trend continued in college as I served in residence life and student governance—ultimately as Student Body President. I felt like my best self when I was leading others. My mom had always worked outside the home, and I sought to be a career woman as well. I planned that I would get married at 27 after establishing myself in a career. However, love interrupted my plans, and instead, I married my charming husband at age 22.

Fast forward to graduate school where I entered the inaugural class in a doctoral program. My husband and I faced quite a few challenges in those first couple of years in my program, including the loss of our first child in the spring of my first year—a perfectly planned academic baby due in early June. I realized that complications in personal life did not alter the demands of graduate school and work. The concept of work-life balance entered my mind as a difficult thing to achieve, but I did not understand the impossibility of it until my daughter was born in my second year of graduate school.

As the first woman in the program to require parental accommodation (maternity leave), I experienced the benefits and the drawbacks of being the pioneer. Although my

department and assistantship were generally supportive, the experience was incredibly difficult. I remember returning to class with my two-week old daughter and wondering how other women had navigated these experiences. My husband, and later other generous friends, would sit outside my three-hour class caring for our daughter, so I could feed her before, during, and/or after class. I quickly became aware of the additional challenges of being a woman in the professional world. Before my daughter was born, I wondered why more women were not in leadership positions; after my daughter was born, I wondered how any woman advanced into leadership positions. Of course, the demands of a newborn clouded my view, but it also set me on a course to discover the experiences of women leaders.

My supportive environment was still wrought with the difficulties of caring for an infant—lack of sleep, sickness, nursing, pumping, and constant adjustments. Learning to be a parent while pursuing a doctorate and working twenty hours a week meant there was little time for reading parenting books and interacting with other moms. I realized that no one in my program fully understood my experience and the expectations placed on me by society. Not only was I expected to be an excellent student, I was also expected to be a nurturing full-time mother and wife. Although my husband helped with domestic tasks on occasion, I was the manager of the home. I planned and prepared meals, washed clothes (including cloth diapers) and dishes, cleaned the house, and organized childcare. My husband was happy to help with anything that I asked of him, but even with an involved and hands-on husband (and father), the domestic load fell primarily on me, perhaps by choice or perhaps due to societal norms.

My experiences of juggling the two greedy institutions of doctoral work and my assistantship alongside my young family inevitably inform the way I approached this study. Although I sought to hear each woman's story independent of my own, I know that my own experiences shaped my interview questions and my interactions with participants. And, although I tried to listen with an objective ear, my ears are female ears and are tuned to hear things from a woman's perspective. My dissertation chair, Dr. Nathan Alleman, provided an alternate (and male) perspective, but we usually interpreted participants' experiences in similar ways. Nonetheless, my story of infant loss and birth during my doctorate program influences my perspective. At best, this perspective allowed me to be more understanding and accurate in my interpretation. At worst, this study is colored by the experience of a working mother.

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